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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

TRICK OR TREAT

Have a spectacularly spooky, happily haunted Halloween p8, 12, 23, 24

DID YOU KNOW?
The term "Middle East" refers to a group of several countries that are located in Asia and Europe.

People in Israel celebrating the release of hostages on October 13

Egypt's role

Egypt, which shares a border with Gaza and Israel, hosted and participated in the recent peace negotiations. It was the first Arab country to recognize Israel when it was created as a Jewish state after World War II (1939–1945) and has often mediated conflicts between Israel and other Middle Eastern nations.

Agreement reached in Middle East

Israel and Hamas, which have been at war in Gaza since October 7, 2023, have carried out the first phase of an agreement that officials hope will lead to a lasting peace. The deal, which included a ceasefire (end to fighting) and the release of hostages and people being detained in prisons, was celebrated around the world.

What happened?

On October 8, it was announced that Israel and Hamas had signed a ceasefire agreement negotiated by the US, Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey. The first phase of the deal called for allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza, a Palestinian territory; the release of hostages taken from Israel by Hamas, a terrorist group based in Gaza; and the release of Palestinians held by Israel. Nearly 180,000 tons of aid, including food, fuel, and medicine, began heading for Gaza. On October 10, Israel pulled its troops back to an agreed-upon location, paving the way for hostages and detainees to be released.

A map of the region

What happened with the hostages?

Hamas captured 251 hostages when it attacked Israel in 2023. Most had been previously released or had died. On October 13, under the agreement, Hamas freed the last 20 living hostages who were still being held in Gaza. They were released to the Israeli military and the International Red Cross, received medical care, and were reunited with their families. In Israel, thousands of people gathered in the streets and public squares, cheering as news of the release was confirmed. The ceasefire agreement also called for Hamas to return the bodies of 28 hostages who died in captivity. When *The Week Junior* went to press on October 14, eight had been returned.

What happened with the detainees?

On October 13, Israel released 1,968 Palestinians. Some had been in custody for many years, while about 1,700 had been detained since the start of the war in 2023. The people who were released were brought home on buses and received medical care before being reunited with their families in Gaza and other territories. They were greeted by large, cheering crowds, who lifted some of the freed people onto their shoulders as they celebrated.

How did people react?

In Israel, the family of hostage Omri Miran, age 48, celebrated his release. "May Omri's return mark the beginning of this recovery and the unity of our people," his family said in a statement. Meanwhile, Amani Nasir, age 30, gathered with her community to await the release of Palestinians. "Today feels like the happiest day of our lives," Nasir told *The New York Times*. "We were happy for our prisoners—and for the Israelis, too." President Donald Trump said, "This is the historic dawn of a new Middle East." Egypt's president, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, said the ceasefire agreement will "secure a better future for the peoples of the region who have long suffered from conflict." António Guterres, head of the United Nations (group of 193 countries working for peace), said in a statement, "With the ceasefire in effect, the people of Gaza and Israel are beginning to glimpse the fragile hope of calm after months of devastation."

What will happen next?

When *The Week Junior* went to press, the peace agreement was fragile but still being upheld. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were displaced from southern Gaza to the north during the war are returning home. Humanitarian aid is increasing and will continue flowing into Gaza. The next phase of the peace agreement is being negotiated and will include rebuilding Gaza, which was largely destroyed during the war, and establishing an international peacekeeping force in the region. Negotiations will also continue to determine what will happen to Hamas, how Israel will continue to withdraw from the territory, and who will govern Gaza going forward.

Celebrations for Diwali to begin

The Hindu festival of Diwali (pronounced de-VAAL-ee) is set to begin on October 20. Also known as the festival of lights, Diwali marks the victory of good over evil and light over darkness. It is celebrated by more than a billion people who follow the Hindu religion and millions who follow the religions of Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism.

Diwali traditions vary by region. In India, it is often celebrated for five days. On the first two days, people clean their homes and put up colorful decorations. They light clay lamps and create colorful designs called *rangoli* with powder. The third day is Lakshmi Puja, when people worship the goddess of wealth, hold feasts, and light fireworks. On the final days, families gather and exchange gifts.

Diwali is celebrated in many other countries around the world. In recent years, it has continued to gain recognition in the US. Pennsylvania made it a statewide holiday in 2024, becoming the first US state to do so, and Connecticut and California did the same this year.

Diwali lights

María Corina Machado in 2023

Nobel Peace Prize is awarded

On October 10, María Corina Machado, a political leader in Venezuela, received the Nobel Peace Prize for her work fighting for democracy. The award was among the 2025 Nobel Prizes announced from October 6–10.

The Nobel Prizes, created by Alfred Nobel (1833–1896), a Swedish inventor, scientist, and businessman, are the world's most prestigious honors. Since 1901 they have recognized groundbreaking achievements in six categories: peace, medicine or physiology, physics, chemistry, literature, and economics.

Machado, age 58, began her political career in 2002 as co-founder of Súmate, an organization that defends citizens' rights and monitors elections for fairness. In 2010, she was elected to the National Assembly with a record number of votes. However, she was removed in 2014 by Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro for opposing his policies. Machado continued to advocate for people's freedom, and today she is living in hiding in Venezuela while speaking out against injustice.

Jorgen Watne Frydnes, head of the Nobel committee, said Machado is "a brave and committed champion of peace" who "keeps the flame of democracy burning." Machado, who was shocked to receive the prize, called it "an immense recognition of the struggle of all Venezuelans."

Each of the Nobel Prizes includes an award of about $1 million, which is divided if there are multiple winners in a category. Recipients, known as Nobel laureates, will receive a diploma and medal at ceremonies that will be held in Sweden and Norway in December.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

BOO! 2025

WITCHES ON THE WATER

A new fall tradition is casting a spell as witches trade their brooms for paddleboards. "Witch Paddle" events are a hit across the US. At one in Minneapolis, Minnesota, paddlers were a striking sight on a local lake.

A paddler

The scuba squad

CREATIVE CARVING

The Tennessee Aquarium is plunging into the Halloween spirit with its annual underwater pumpkin-carving spectacle. Costumed scuba divers chisel jack-o'-lanterns in a giant tank as audiences—and curious fish—look on. Once complete, the festive pumpkins are displayed.

MARKING A MILESTONE

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is celebrating 75 years of its "Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF" campaign. For generations, children have carried orange boxes to collect cash donations while trick-or-treating on Halloween, raising nearly $200 million to support kids in more than 190 countries. Boxes are available at unicefusa.org.

A collection box

ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES (2); SHUTTERSTOCK; LAS VEGAS ACES; ON THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); TENNESSEE AQUARIUM; UNICEF; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

BUSY CAFETERIAS
California public schools serve nearly 1 billion meals to students every year.

Best school lunches

Vermont, Hawaii, West Virginia, Delaware, and Washington, DC, offer the healthiest school lunches to students, according to ProCare Therapy's annual rankings. Those states are making the best effort to provide fruits and vegetables, reduce consumption of sugary drinks, buy food locally, and offer farm-to-school programs.

California takes action on school meals

Many ultraprocessed foods will be removed from school lunches in California over the next 10 years as part of a new law targeting unhealthy menu items. The legislation is the first of its kind in the US.

What happened?

On October 8, Governor Gavin Newsom signed the Real Foods, Healthy Kids Act into law at a middle school in Los Angeles. He said the law's goal is to "make sure every California student has access to healthy, delicious meals that help them thrive." The law requires the California Department of Public Health to define the terms "ultraprocessed foods of concern" and "restricted school foods" by 2028. Schools must begin phasing out those items in 2029 with the goal of eliminating them by 2035.

What are ultraprocessed foods?

There isn't a single, widely accepted definition of ultraprocessed foods. Researchers often describe them as foods that contain ingredients you wouldn't find in a home kitchen, such as stabilizers and thickeners. They also tend to have high levels of sodium, added sugar, or saturated fat. Examples include packaged foods like cookies and snacks, fried foods, and sugary drinks. These items are a concern because studies show that consuming a lot of them can increase a person's risk of health problems.

How did people react?

Ravinder Khaira, a pediatrician in Sacramento, was among the health care professionals who praised the new law for highlighting the importance of eating healthy foods to prevent illness. Children deserve access to nutritious food that "supports their physical, emotional, and cognitive development," Khaira said. The California School Boards Association expressed concern that the law doesn't include funding to help schools comply. One government analysis found that trading ultraprocessed foods for healthier options could increase schools' costs.

What will happen next?

California's public health workers will begin defining "ultraprocessed foods of concern" and "restricted school foods." Lawmakers in other states may also draft or enact similar measures. Earlier this year, West Virginia banned seven artificial dyes from its school meals.

WORD OF THE WEEK

SPIDER

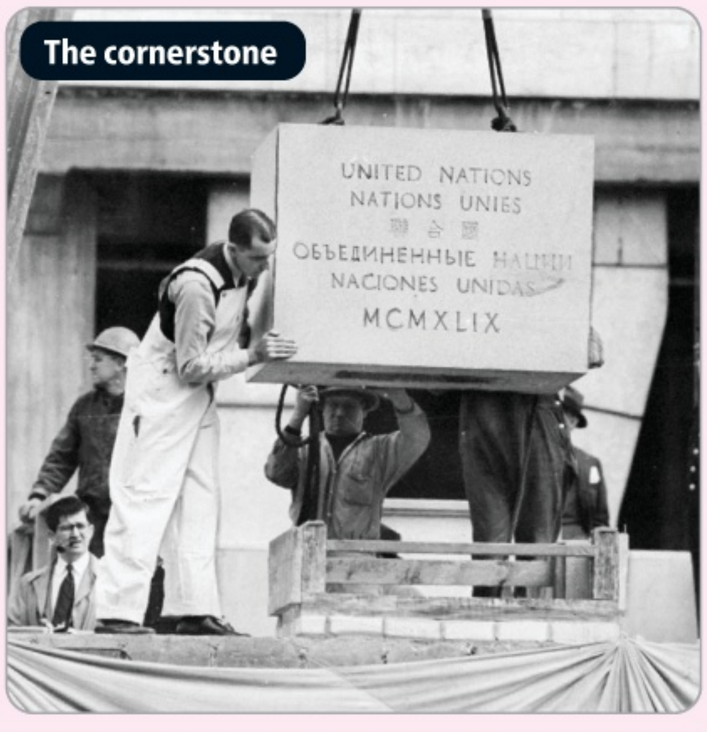
The spider takes its name from the Old English verb *spinnan*, meaning "to spin." It once went by another name, "attercop" (meaning "poison-head"), because at one time all spiders were believed to be poisonous. The "cop" part of the name eventually became the "cob" in "cobweb."

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

October 24, 1949

Cornerstone of UN headquarters laid

On October 24, 1949, the cornerstone of the United Nations (UN) headquarters was laid in New York City. The date was chosen because it was the fourth anniversary of the founding of the UN, an organization that works for peace and cooperation. The flags of the 59 member countries flew at the event. Today, the UN consists of 193 member countries. The building was completed in 1952.



Tuskegee Airman remembered

Lieutenant Colonel George Hardy, an original Tuskegee Airman and the last living pilot of the group who fought in World War II (1939–1945), died on October 7 at age 100. The Tuskegee Airmen were the nation's first Black military pilots and helped pave the way for the desegregation of the military and the civil rights movement. Hardy's "legacy is one of courage, resilience...and dogged perseverance against racism," said a Tuskegee Airmen official.

Report on kids' technology use

According to a new Pew Research survey on kids and technology, 68% of parents said kids should be at least 12 years old before getting a smartphone. About 60% of parents with kids ages 11 to 12, and 29% with kids ages 8 to 10, said their child has their own cellphone. The survey also found that YouTube is popular, with 85% of parents saying their child watches videos on the platform.

Team Barbie honors rugby stars

US Olympian Ilona Maher is one of four female rugby players being honored with a Barbie doll. Mattel, the toy company, said the "Team Barbie" collection celebrates the players for being "powerful role models" and that the dolls have a muscular frame to recognize women's strength. The collection, which also includes players from the UK, France, and New Zealand, will be available in 2026.

MacArthur "genius" grants announced

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has named 22 people as its MacArthur fellows for 2025. Also known as "genius grants," MacArthur fellowships are given to US citizens or residents whose work has demonstrated "exceptional creativity." This year's fellows will each receive a grant of $800,000 to use as they wish to make advances in their field.

The foundation was established in 1970 by John D. MacArthur (1897–1978), an insurance and business executive, and his wife Catherine (1908–1981), who worked with him, to fund creative solutions to urgent global problems. In 1981, the foundation began awarding MacArthur Fellowships, and between 20 and 30 new fellows are chosen every year. People are nominated by experts in various fields and are not told in advance that they are being considered, so the fellowships come as a surprise.

Many of this year's fellows are scientists. William Tarpeh has been studying how to remove chemicals from wastewater and use them to create new products. Jason McLellan is a biologist whose research has helped create vaccines (medicines that prevent an illness). Sébastien Philippe examines the effects and risks of making and storing nuclear weapons.

Fellowships were also awarded to political and social scientists. Hahrie Han studies ways to encourage more citizens to participate in the democratic process. The work of Kristina Douglass highlights the importance of including Indigenous people (first people known to have inhabited a place) in environmental conservation efforts.

WOW! A total of 1,175 people have been the recipients of MacArthur grants since 1981.

Other fellows were chosen for their artistic work. Jeremy Frey is a basket weaver who uses traditional Wabanaki techniques. Novelist Tommy Orange writes about the experiences of Native Americans. Tonika Lewis Johnson uses photography, maps, and other tools to depict racial inequality in Chicago. Heather Christian is a composer and playwright.

Philippe said he is grateful for the fellowship. "It gives you freedom to explore avenues that would not otherwise be easy to pursue," he said.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Loose monkey lured with hot cup of coffee in South Carolina" *UPI*

JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION(JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION (6); MALCOLM MAYFIELD/U.S. AIR FORCE FILE; GETTY IMAGES (2); PETRA RAJNICOVA / MATTEL; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

Around the world

Healthy seagrass

European Union
Renaming plant-based foods

The European Parliament has voted to ban the use of meat-related words like "burger," "chicken," or "sausage" to describe plant-based foods. Animal farmers are among the ban's supporters, who say terms like "veggie burger" can confuse consumers. The ban still needs approval from other parts of the European Union and its 27 member countries.

A plant-based product

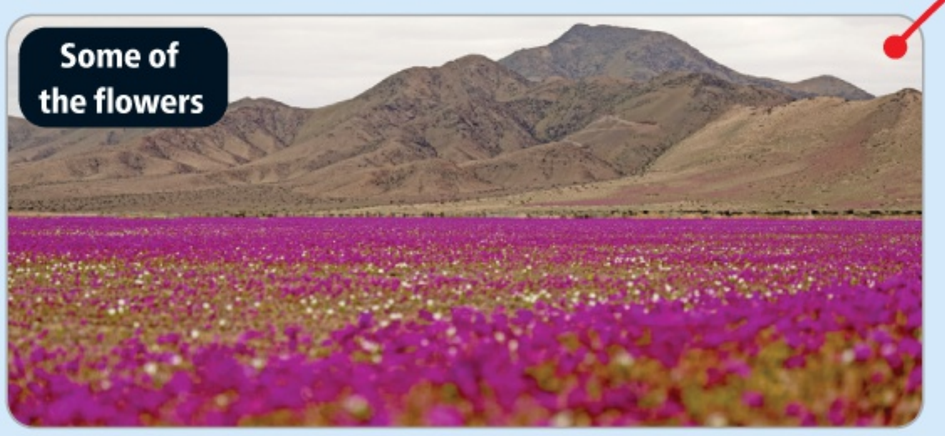
Ibiza, Spain
Plans to save seagrass

Police are monitoring tourist boats around the islands of Ibiza and Formentera to stop them from destroying seagrass. The boats' anchors and engine propellers often tear up these plants, which grow on the ocean floor. Seagrass helps marine life survive by producing oxygen so they can breathe. It also plays an important role in fighting climate change by absorbing gases such as carbon dioxide that contribute to global warming.

Paul Biya votes in the election.

Cameroon
Oldest president seeks reelection

A presidential election took place in Cameroon on October 12. The world's oldest president, Paul Biya, age 92, was hoping to be reelected for an eighth term and extend his 43 years in power. More than 8 million people registered to vote. Biya's opponent, Issa Tchiroma Bakary, age 76, declared victory the following day, but the government has until October 26 to announce the official results.

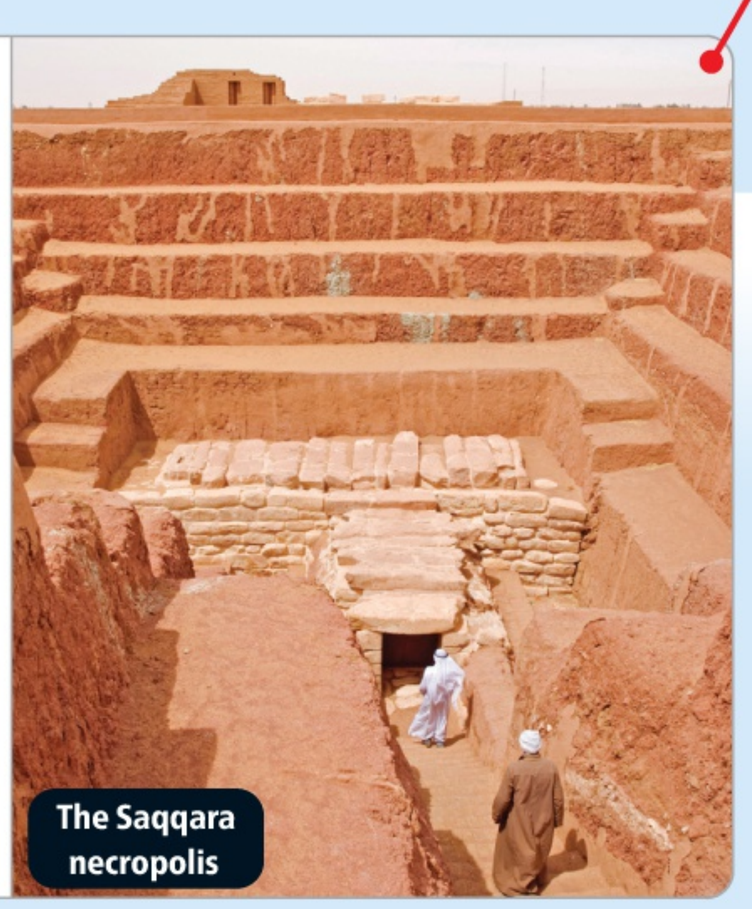

Some of the flowers

Chile
Rare wildflower bloom in desert

Unusual rainfall in the Atacama Desert has transformed one of the world's driest places into a sea of wildflowers. The area usually gets less than one tenth of an inch of rain per year, but this July and August some parts received 2.3 inches. The extraordinary weather conditions led to a bloom of purple and pink flowers, attracting tourists to witness the colorful display.

Saqqara, Egypt
Painting vanishes

A 4,000-year-old limestone painting from the ancient Saqqara necropolis (cemetery) has disappeared. The artwork measures about 24 inches long and 16 inches wide. It was painted on a rock wall inside a tomb, which is known for having a "curse" inscribed on its exterior to warn intruders against entering. The art appears to have been cut out of the interior wall. Officials say an investigation is underway.


The Saqqara necropolis

ALAMY (3); REUTERS; GETTY IMAGES (4); SHUTTERSTOCK; CHRIS TAGG

Around the world

Denmark
Social media proposal

Danish prime minister Mette Frederiksen has announced plans to ban social media for children under the age of 15. She said that using screens and social media can be linked to mental health and concentration problems. Under the plan, parents could still choose to allow kids to use social media at age 13 or 14.

Heilbronn, Germany
City crowned green capital of Europe

The German city of Heilbronn was named the new green capital of Europe at the European Green Cities Awards on October 2. The city was chosen because of its work to reduce noise and air pollution, improve public transportation, and create nature-based designs, like tree-filled "climate groves" that cool down urban areas. Heilbronn will receive about $700,000 to spend on more projects to help the environment for future generations.

Tibet, China
Hikers rescued after blizzard

Hundreds of people who were stranded on or near Mount Everest when a blizzard struck have been brought to safety. When unexpected heavy snow hit the Karma Valley, nearly 600 hikers and more than 300 guides and other staff were trapped there for several days. The search-and-rescue operation was one of the largest ever conducted in the area, involving about 900 rescuers with horses, yaks, oxen, and drones.

Madagascar
Military takeover

On October 14, Madagascar's military said it had seized control of the island nation. This followed weeks of protests, triggered by water and power shortages and public anger toward the government. Troops from an army unit called CAPSAT, which had previously helped president Andry Rajoelina, joined protesters on October 11 and announced they were taking over the country's armed forces. Rajoelina is believed to have fled the country.

Seychelles
Baby tortoises bring hope for species

A scientific trial to help the Aldabra giant tortoise has been a success after 13 babies hatched. Seychelles has one of the last remaining populations of the large reptiles, which weigh up to 550 pounds and can live for 150 years. Experts took eggs that had failed to hatch in the wild and used a technique called "artificial incubation" to help them hatch.

BOO! 2025

Has Halloween gotten too scary?

Some people love the spooky season, but others feel it has gotten out of hand.

What you need to know

- **Halloween dates back about 2,000 years to the Celts, who wore costumes and masks as a way to ward off ghosts and evil spirits.**
- **Since the Middle Ages, November 1 has been a religious holiday called All Hallows or All Saints' Day. The day before—October 31—is All Hallows' Eve, which is shortened to Halloween.**
- **In the 1900s, people started wearing Halloween costumes depicting their favorite superheroes and characters from books, movies, and TV shows.**

TONS OF TREATS
Americans buy about 600 million pounds of candy for Halloween each year.

Spooky season is upon us! On Halloween night this year, the sidewalks will be filled with Elphabas, Glindas, Chicken Jockeys, and even some KPop Demon Hunters. But there will also be plenty of zombies, monsters, and mummies—and many houses will be decorated with scary scenes, from skeletons and headless corpses to giant spiders and coffins. Some people feel there's too much terror, even if it's all in good fun, and would prefer we stick to jack-o'-lanterns and candy. But others insist that Halloween is the one day when people get to dress up, act spooky, and really use their imaginations. What do you think? Has Halloween gotten too scary?

Yes—it's for kids, not adults

Halloween may have started out as a way to ward off evil spirits, but in modern times it's supposed to be about kids, costumes, and candy—not scaring the pants off people. A little spookiness sets the mood, but nowadays decorations can be so scary that people can't tell what's real. In Texas in 2020, a "body" on a lawn triggered multiple 911 calls. When police arrived, they realized it was a very realistic Halloween decoration. That's not fun! And this is only happening because stores are trying to sell more seasonal products and adults are trying to outdo each other with shocking displays. They're ruining it for everyone else, including kids.

No—it's OK to be a little scared

Halloween dates back thousands of years and has always been rooted in tales of ghosts, witches, and spirits. Now people are just leaning into the scary part, using their imaginations to create vivid decorations and costumes. Going all in makes it special and fun for the neighborhood and brings a community together. After all, decorating your house lets kids know they should ring your bell to trick-or-treat. Besides, even kids know it's all fake—skeletons can't actually wave from a window, right? It's good to be a little scared when we know we're not in any real danger. It helps us learn how to handle fear in a safe environment.

YES Three reasons Halloween has gotten too scary

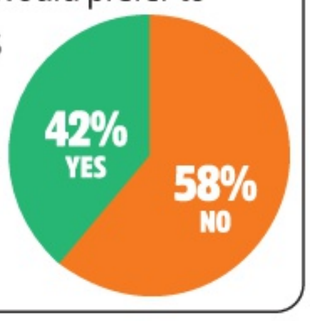
1. **These days, Halloween is supposed to be about spooky fun for kids, not terrifying our neighbors and friends.**
2. **In some cases, people can't tell real from fake. There's nothing fun about that.**
3. **Halloween displays have gotten more graphic because adults are striving for shock value. They're ruining it for others.**

NO Three reasons Halloween has not gotten too scary

1. **Halloween has always been rooted in spooky traditions, and people are just continuing that in creative ways.**
2. **When people go all out on this one night a year, it sets a festive mood and brings a neighborhood together.**
3. **Experiencing a little fear in a safe situation can be good for us.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if paper money should get new faces. Most of you would prefer to leave US bills as they are: 58% said no, while 42% said yes.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think Halloween has gotten too scary or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

Believing in poetry

Arthur Sze is making history in his new role for the nation.

Acclaimed poet and translator Arthur Sze is the 25th US poet laureate, appointed by the Library of Congress. He was sworn in on October 9 for a one-year term and is the first Asian American to hold the position of official poet of the US.

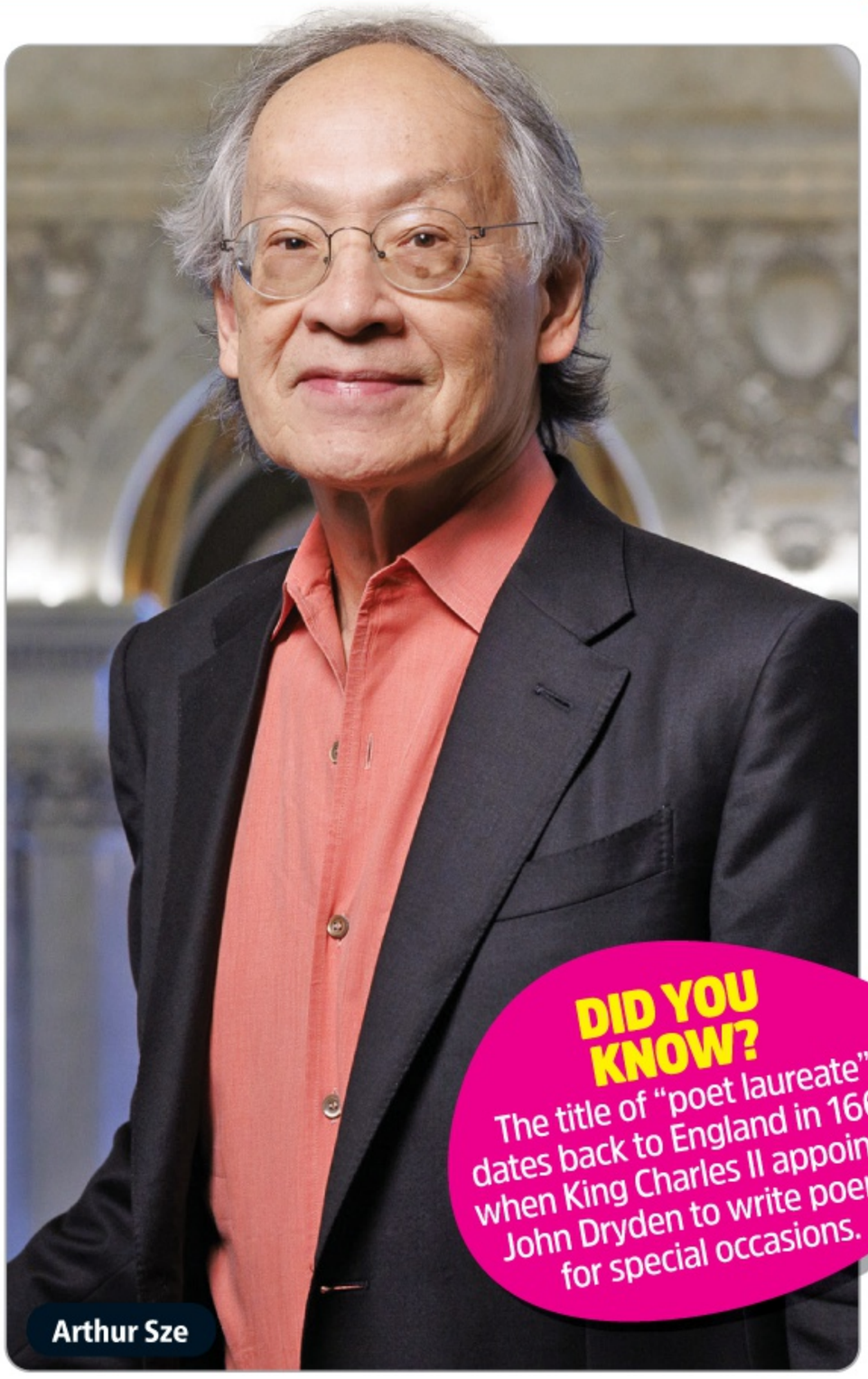
Born in New York City, Sze is the son of Chinese immigrants. He briefly attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but while sitting in a math lecture, he felt inspired to write poems in the back of his notebook. "I could feel a thrill of language," Sze told PBS. He soon transferred to the University of California, Berkeley, and created his own major translating ancient Chinese poems.

Receiving the National Book Award for Poetry

Sze's work consists of nature poems rooted in close observation, often exploring human impact on the natural world. He has written 12 books of poems, including translations of classical Chinese poetry for modern readers. His most well-known book, *Sight Lines*, won the 2019 National Book Award for Poetry, and his most recent, *Into the Hush*, was published earlier this year.

When his appointment was announced, Sze called it "an amazing honor." As poet laureate, he plans to focus on works that have been translated from other languages into English. He hopes to show how poetry can make a positive difference in people's everyday lives. "We live in such a fast-paced world," Sze said. "Poetry helps us slow down, deepen our attention, connect, and live more fully."

Sze told *The Week Junior* that his advice for young poets and storytellers is this: "Enjoy the process of discovery through writing—feed your imagination."



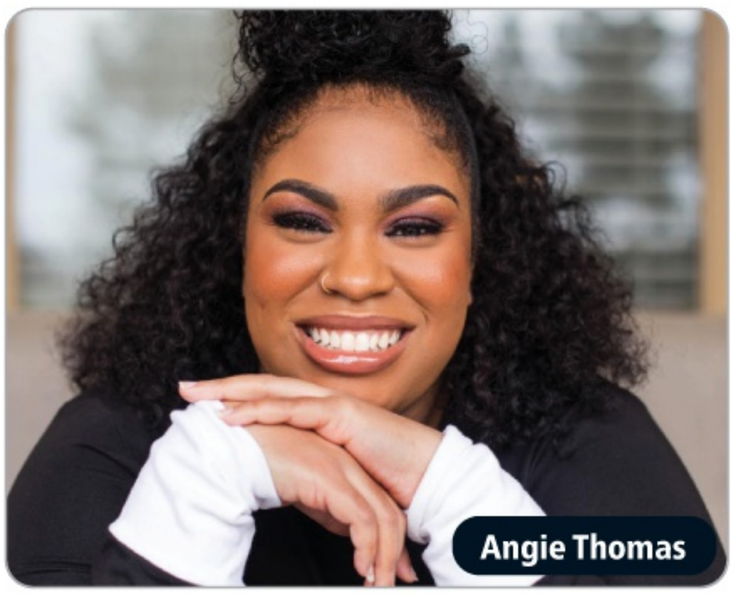
Arthur Sze

DID YOU KNOW?
The title of "poet laureate" dates back to England in 1668, when King Charles II appointed John Dryden to write poems for special occasions.

A top stone skimmer

Lucy Wood of the UK recently won her sixth women's title at the World Stone Skimming Championships, setting a world record for the most wins ever. The event has taken place each year since 1983 on the small island of Easdale, Scotland. Participants must skip flat stones at least twice and as far as possible within a marked lane. Wood first entered the contest in 2011 while on vacation and placed third. She took the top spot for the first time in 2013. "It's a really useless life skill, but I seem to have it," she told *The New York Times*.

Lucy Wood

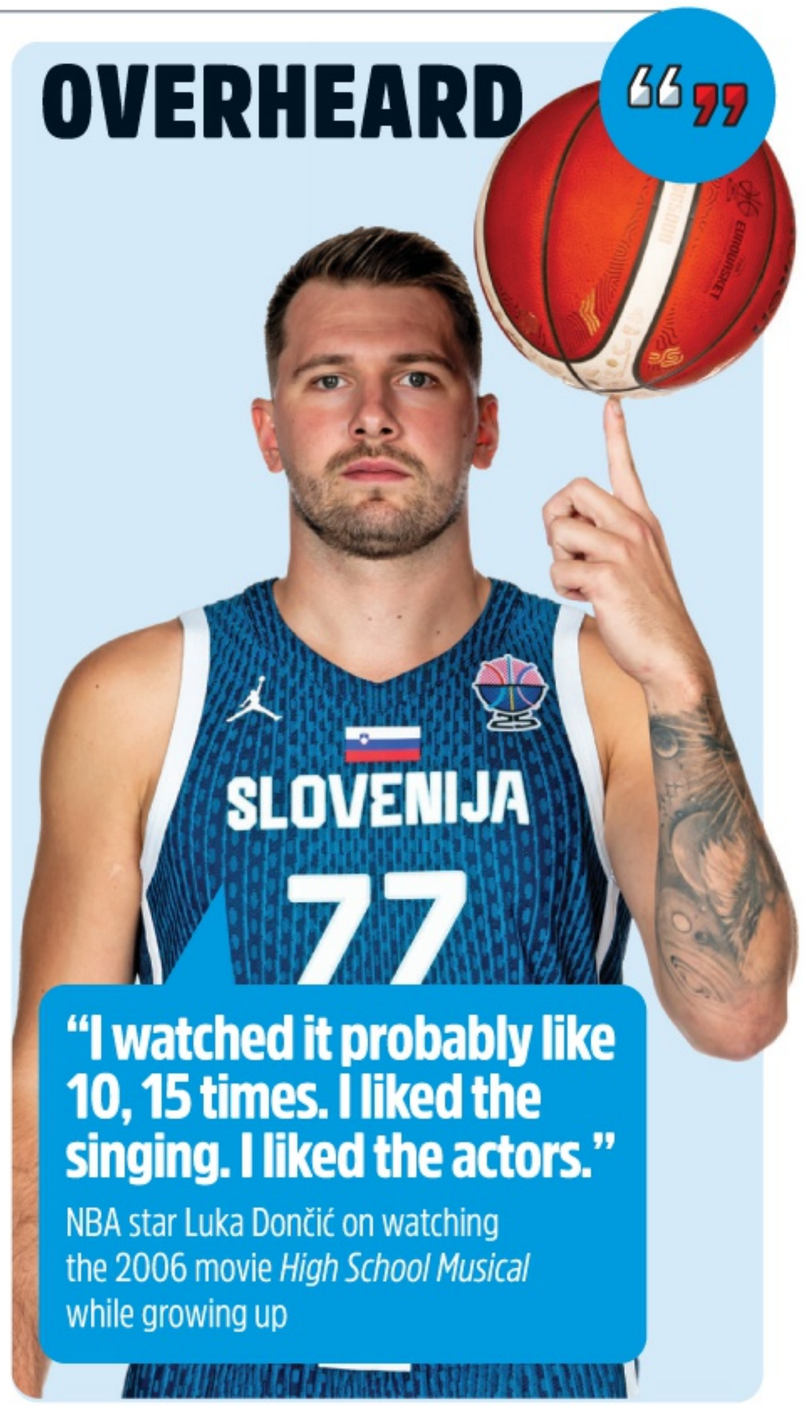


Angie Thomas

Telling magical tales

Best-selling author Angie Thomas has published a sequel to her popular book *Nic Blake and the Remarkables*. The new book, titled *The Book of Anansi*, explores African American history and folklore and follows 12-year-old Nic as she unlocks new powers and races to find a legendary text. Along the way, she's challenged to rethink how she judges others. Thomas hopes the message will resonate with readers. "We have a choice whether we're going to make good assumptions about people or use history and negative things to make assumptions," she told CBS.

OVERHEARD



"I watched it probably like 10, 15 times. I liked the singing. I liked the actors."

NBA star Luka Dončić on watching the 2006 movie *High School Musical* while growing up

SHAWN MILLER/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; KARSTEN MORAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; COURTESY OF WORLD STONE SKIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS; IMANI KHAYYAM; GETTY IMAGES

A common octopus

Cute deep-sea fish found

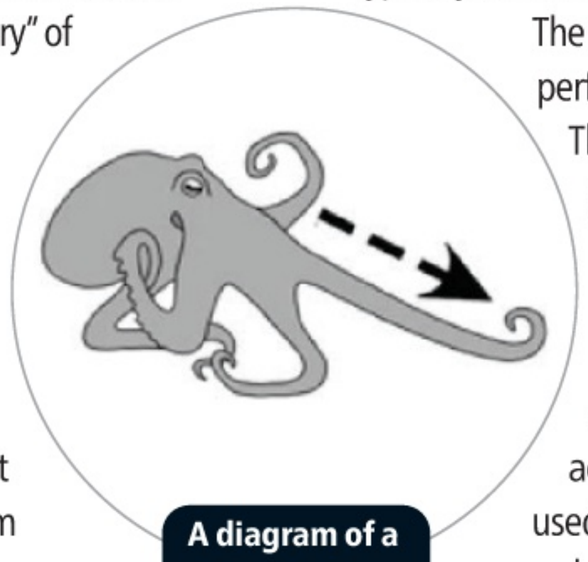
Researchers recently encountered three new snailfish species, including the bumpy snailfish (below), in the deep ocean near California. Many deep-sea creatures look like "monsters" due to their unusual adaptations, but this one is "pretty adorable," a scientist told *The New York Times*.

A guide to octopus movement

As octopuses live their lives under the sea, these intelligent creatures have to carefully coordinate their eight arms in order to move around and complete tasks. Now researchers have compiled a "visual dictionary" of octopus arm movements.

Scientists from Florida Atlantic University and the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, studied 25 video recordings of three octopus species. The videos were taken in six different habitats in the wild, ranging from coral reefs to the seafloor.

The team identified four major ways octopuses change the shape of their arms, known as deformations: shortening, lengthening, bending, or twisting the arm. Some of these deformations were more commonly done with a certain part of the arm. For instance, octopuses typically bent an arm near its tip.


A diagram of a "reach" action

The deformations can be used to perform 12 different arm actions. These include reaching out, grasping objects, raising the arm, or standing the arm straight up against the ground like a stilt. Each arm is capable of performing any of the 12 actions, but the octopuses mainly used their back arms to move around and their front arms for exploring their environment.

The scientists noticed 15 common octopus behaviors that involve these actions. Many required different arms to perform different actions at the same time. To stand up, for example, an octopus had to raise some of its arms and use others like stilts, while the rest reached out to steady its body. When an octopus walks across the ocean floor, various arms push it forward, roll it along like a conveyor belt, or trail behind it.

The strength and flexibility of octopus arms is essential for finding food, building dens, and fighting off predators or rivals, lead author Chelsea Bennice explained. Complex limb movements also enable the animals to blend in with their environment, whether they are curling into a rock-like shape or fluttering their arms upward and outward to resemble seaweed drifting through the water. "Octopuses are ultimate multitaskers," Bennice said. "These versatile abilities allow octopuses to thrive in a wide range of habitats."

PLACE OF THE WEEK

Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky

The world's longest known cave system is found in Mammoth Cave National Park. It has more than 400 miles of mapped underground limestone caverns and passages, with more to be discovered. Above ground, about 130 species of animals, such as bobcats, coyotes, and foxes, live in the park's hills and valley, while Northern cardinals, hawks, and bald eagles fly above. The park has so many important landforms and species that it is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a status that gives it protections so it can be preserved for future generations.

A coyote

BOO! 2025

HOME SWEET HOME
Bats are found on every continent except Antarctica.

A spectral bat

Big bats have a cuddly side

Don't let their spooky reputation scare you—according to new research, bats can be warm and caring. The study revealed that spectral bats like to cuddle.

There are more than 1,400 species of bats, ranging from the size of a bumblebee to that of a small dog. One of the largest in the western hemisphere, the spectral bat, has a 3-foot wingspan and eats rodents, birds, and other bats. Scientists thought these creatures of the night were fierce and solitary until researcher Marisa Tietge put a camera in a hollow tree trunk in Costa Rica.

For three months, her team watched a family of spectral bats—which seemed to include a male, a female, and two pups of different ages—living in the tree. The bats groomed each other, cuddled, played together, and often greeted each other by wrapping their wings into a sort of hug. The male also brought food to the female while she nursed a pup, behavior that had not been seen in bats before. "These apex predators are actually so gentle and curious," Tietge told *Science News*. "Hugging seems to be their way of keeping family bonds strong."

Animal of the week: Asian golden cat

Rare footage of an Asian golden cat was captured at Khao Luang National Park in Thailand. Wildlife cameras are helping scientists understand the elusive cats' behavior and coat patterns, which can vary from golden to brown, gray, black, or spotted.

- **LIFESPAN:** 23 years
- **HABITAT:** Forests in South and Southeast Asia
- **SIZE:** Up to 63 inches and 35 pounds
- **DIET:** Deer, rodents, reptiles, and birds
- **FUN FACT:** In Thai folklore, these cats are known as *seua fai*, or "fire tigers."

Good week / Bad week

Mountain frogs

For the first time, a team of researchers from Southern Cross University in Australia has successfully bred red and yellow mountain frogs. Seven of these endangered frogs were released into the wild to help save the species.

Giant sequoia trees

Since 2020, as many as 14,000 giant sequoia trees—about one fifth of all mature sequoias—have been lost to wildfires. Firefighters have worked to save groves in California with tools such as sprinkler systems, but fires still pose threats.

Ask an expert: "How do spiders make their webs?" Riley, 7, Pennsylvania

Alex Winsor
Spider expert, University of Massachusetts Amherst

BOO! 2025

Each spider carries a built-in web factory. Special glands in its back end produce liquid silk, which is made of proteins. When released through nozzles called spinnerets, it forms long, stretchy strands that are stronger than steel! To make a web, the spider connects the strands, like weaving a basket.

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about the University of Massachusetts Amherst at umass.edu/biology.

SCIENCE SOURCE; ALAMY; STEPHEN MAHONY; GETTY IMAGES (2); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); NATURE.COM; 2019 MBARI

A glowing sight on a

For generations, jack-o'-lanterns have been lighting the way on Halloween.

Every October, carved pumpkins, from scary to silly, light up windows and doorsteps. How did this creative custom begin?

Turnip lanterns

A spooky start

A jack-o'-lantern is a pumpkin carved with facial features and lit from within by a candle or other light source. The tradition dates back to the 1600s with Samhain, a harvest festival celebrated in Ireland and Scotland that evolved into the modern holiday of Halloween. People carved scary faces into root vegetables like turnips, beets, and potatoes, then put hot coals or candles inside them. These "lanterns" were placed in windows and doorways to ward off evil spirits. An Irish folktale about a mythical character named Stingy Jack, a trickster who roamed the land at night carrying a glowing turnip, inspired the name Jack-of-the-Lantern, which became jack-o'-lantern.

Making a jack-o'-lantern

Carving comes to the US

In the 1840s, large waves of Irish immigrants arrived in the US, bringing their tradition of carving root vegetables with them. In America, however, they found a more widely available substitute that was bigger than turnips and easier to carve: pumpkins. By the mid-1800s, US children were carving them and carrying them as a prank to spook friends. As Halloween celebrations spread across the country in the late 19th century, jack-o'-lanterns became a symbol of the holiday.

PUMPKIN PALETTE

In addition to orange, pumpkins come in colors such as yellow, green, white, and blue.

Pumpkin traditions

Each autumn, pumpkin enthusiasts celebrate the season with quirky contests throughout the US and the world. Here are a few highlights.

Whopping weigh-offs

Farmers across the US compete every autumn for the honor of heaviest pumpkin. (A weigh-off at the Topsfield Fair, an annual tradition in Massachusetts, is shown at left.) The heaviest jack-o'-lantern ever recorded—in Half Moon Bay, California, in 2023—weighed 2,749 pounds.

GETTY IMAGES (6); ALAMY; COURTESY OF MANIAC PUMPKIN CARVERS

spooky night

Work by Maniac Pumpkin Carvers

Growing in popularity

The first image of a pumpkin jack-o'-lantern is thought to have appeared in an 1867 issue of *Harper's Weekly* magazine, and pumpkins have been part of pop culture ever since. L. Frank Baum's 1904 book *The Marvelous Land of Oz* featured Jack Pumpkinhead, a gentleman with a jack-o'-lantern for a head. In the TV show *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*, produced in 1966, Linus believes that a creature called "The Great Pumpkin" will appear on Halloween night. The character Jack Skellington is known as the "Pumpkin King" of Halloween Town in the 1993 Disney film *The Nightmare Before Christmas.* Maniac Pumpkin Carvers, based in New York, use locally grown pumpkins to create detailed, artistic carvings.

The Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze

Glowing festivals

Many regions across the US have festivals where visitors can walk among artfully arranged displays of jack-o'-lanterns. In 2013, the Keene Pumpkin Festival in New Hampshire earned a Guinness World Records title for the highest number of lit jack-o'-lanterns, with 30,581. This year, the annual Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze in Hudson Valley, New York, is displaying more than 7,000 hand-carved, illuminated pumpkins. The Jack-o'-Lantern Spectacular at the Roger WIlliams Zoo in Providence, Rhode Island, features pumpkin-related trivia questions along the trails. The Magic of the Jack-o'-Lanterns event in California and Colorado has a trail of lit pumpkins nearly a mile long, s'mores stations, and a giant bounce pad.

Catapult competitions

Another tradition at many fall festivals is launching pumpkins as far as possible from a catapult—also known as "punkin chunkin'." A class of fifth graders at Loma Vista Elementary School in Santa Ana, California, designed this pumpkin catapult (left).

Pumpkin paddles

In pumpkin paddle-offs in the US and around the world, such as the pumpkin regatta in Kasterlee, Belgium (left), people carve out giant pumpkins, then row from their perches inside the hallowed gourds. The goal: Reach the finish line first without sinking.

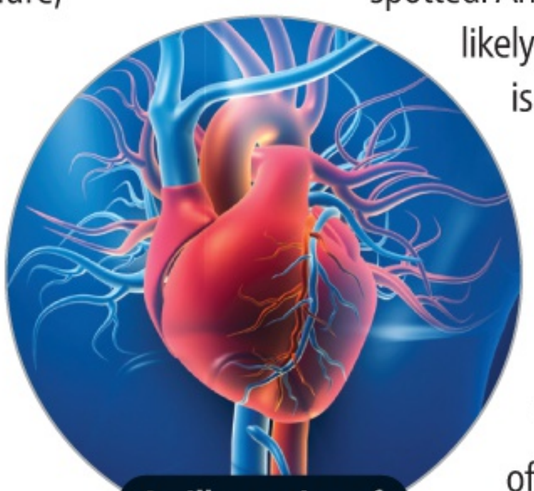
LISTEN IN
The word "stethoscope" comes from the Greek words *stethos*, meaning "chest," and *skopein*, which means "to explore."

Using the AI-powered stethoscope

A stethoscope that uses AI

A new kind of stethoscope that uses artificial intelligence (AI, when a computer imitates human learning) can detect three different heart conditions in 15 seconds. Stethoscopes (see box at right) are devices that medical experts use to listen to sounds in the body, such as a heartbeat.

In the US, more than 6.5 million people have a condition called heart failure, when their heart muscle is not pumping blood properly. There are signs of the condition, including shortness of breath, but estimates show that 70% of people have the condition confirmed only after they have gone to the hospital for serious symptoms. Early detection enables patients to receive lifesaving treatment sooner.



An illustration of a human heart

The new device, which was developed in the UK, is the size of a playing card. Doctors put it on a patient's chest, where it records the electrical signals in the heart and listens to the sound of blood flowing through it. This information is then sent to an AI system, which compares it to data from thousands of other people to see if there's a problem. The results are immediately sent to a smartphone.

The device was tested in a study with more than 12,700 people over the course of a year. The results showed that the AI stethoscope was able to detect unusual heart activity that a doctor might miss with a traditional stethoscope. Patients examined with the AI stethoscope were also twice as likely to have their heart failure spotted. And the device was 3.5 times more likely to detect atrial fibrillation, which is an irregular heartbeat, and was better at detecting when one or more of a patient's heart valves were not working properly.

The AI stethoscope does require some caution, however. The study found that the device often detected heart failure in patients who did not actually have it. The researchers who designed it said it should be used only when doctors suspect that a patient has heart problems, not for routine checks on healthy people.

"This is an elegant example of how the humble stethoscope, invented more than 200 years ago, can be upgraded for the 21st century," said Sonya Babu-Narayan, clinical director at the British Heart Foundation, a UK nonprofit that partly funded the research.

Inventing the stethoscope

In 1816, a French doctor named René Laënnec saw two children using a long piece of wood to send secret messages to each other. The first child put his ear to one end of the wood. When the second child scratched the other end of the wood with a pin, the first child could hear it.

Laënnec remembered this later when he was examining a young woman but felt awkward about resting his ear on her chest. He rolled up a piece of paper, putting one end to her chest and the other to his ear, and could clearly hear her heartbeat.

Laënnec made a wooden version of the device (shown in the illustration above). Over time, stethoscopes were designed with two earpieces and rubber tubing. Today, it is an essential part of a doctor's toolkit.

Scientists create plants that glow like lights

A team of researchers at South China Agricultural University have created glow-in-the-dark plants that can be recharged in sunlight. They can be made to glow with colors like red, green, and blue.

Scientists have been researching glowing plants for many years. A recent study involved injecting particles of phosphor into plants. Phosphor particles absorb and store light, then slowly release it over time. They are already used to make glow-in-the-dark toys and paints.

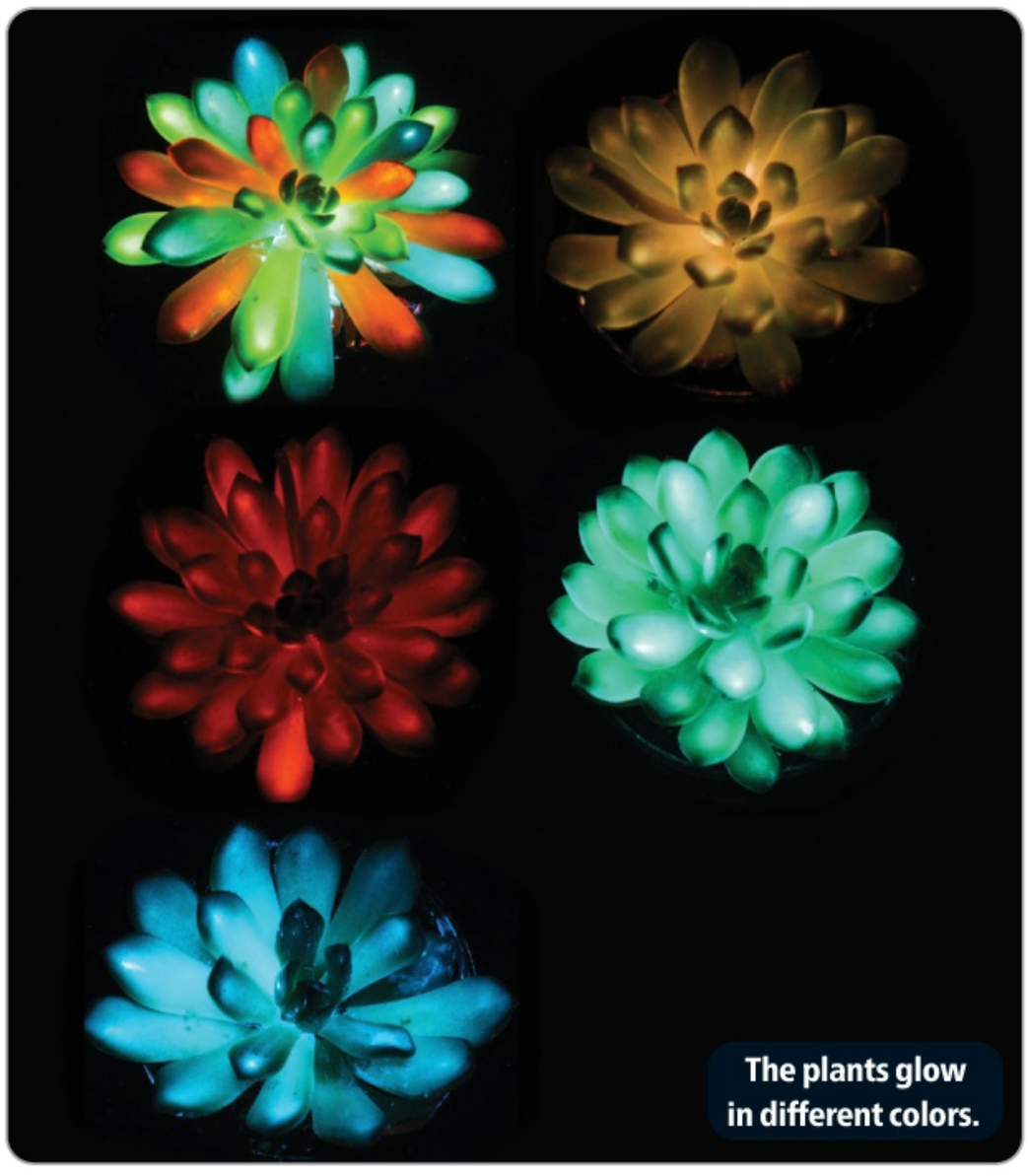
WOW!
There are more than 70 species of mushroom that can naturally glow in the dark.

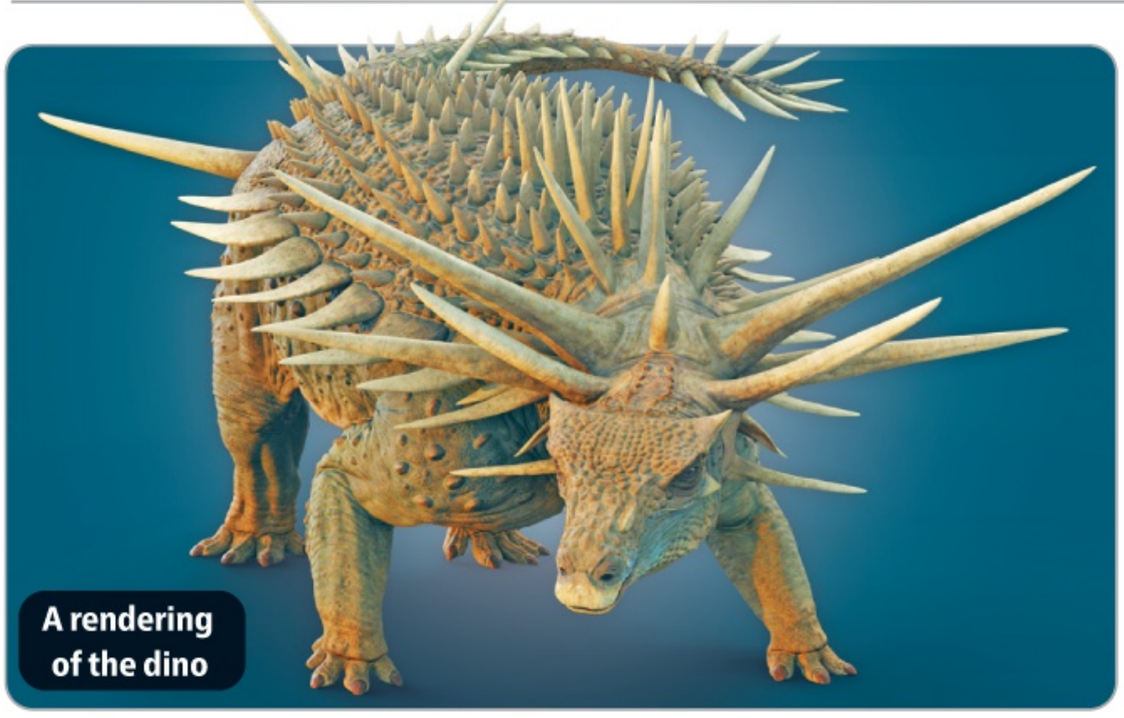
The team made a wall of 56 glowing plants, which created enough light to see text, images, and a person standing nearly four inches away. The glow lasted up to two hours, and the plants recharged when they were exposed to sunlight.

The technique didn't work very well on plants like bok choy or pothos. But the scientists said it worked very well on a succulent (type of plant with fleshy leaves that hold water) called Echeveria mebina.

Researchers said they achieved their goal of proving that the concept could work. They did acknowledge, however, that more research is needed to determine whether the phosphor affects the health of the plants.

The scientists said the aim of the project is to create an environmentally friendly alternative to electric lights. "Imagine glowing trees replacing streetlights," said Shuting Liu, the lead author of the study.


The plants glow in different colors.


A rendering of the dino

Spiky, armored dinosaur discovered

Scientists identified an unusual new dinosaur with 3-foot-long spikes jutting from its neck. Named Spicomellus afer, it lived 165 million years ago in what is now Morocco.

In 2019, Susannah Maidment, a paleontologist (scientist who studies the past through fossils) at the UK's Natural History Museum, came across a fossil with spikes sticking out of it, which had never been seen before. Scientists traveled to Morocco and uncovered more of the skeleton.

Maidment said the animal was covered in spikes, with "a bony collar that wraps around its neck and some sort of weapon on the end of its tail." The creature is also the oldest ankylosaur (armored dinosaur) ever found. This suggests that the species evolved to have armor earlier than scientists previously thought.

The team thinks the spiky armor was for more than protection. It was also meant to attract mates and to show off—like peacocks do.

AMAZING INVENTION

A printer that makes edible art

The Edibot

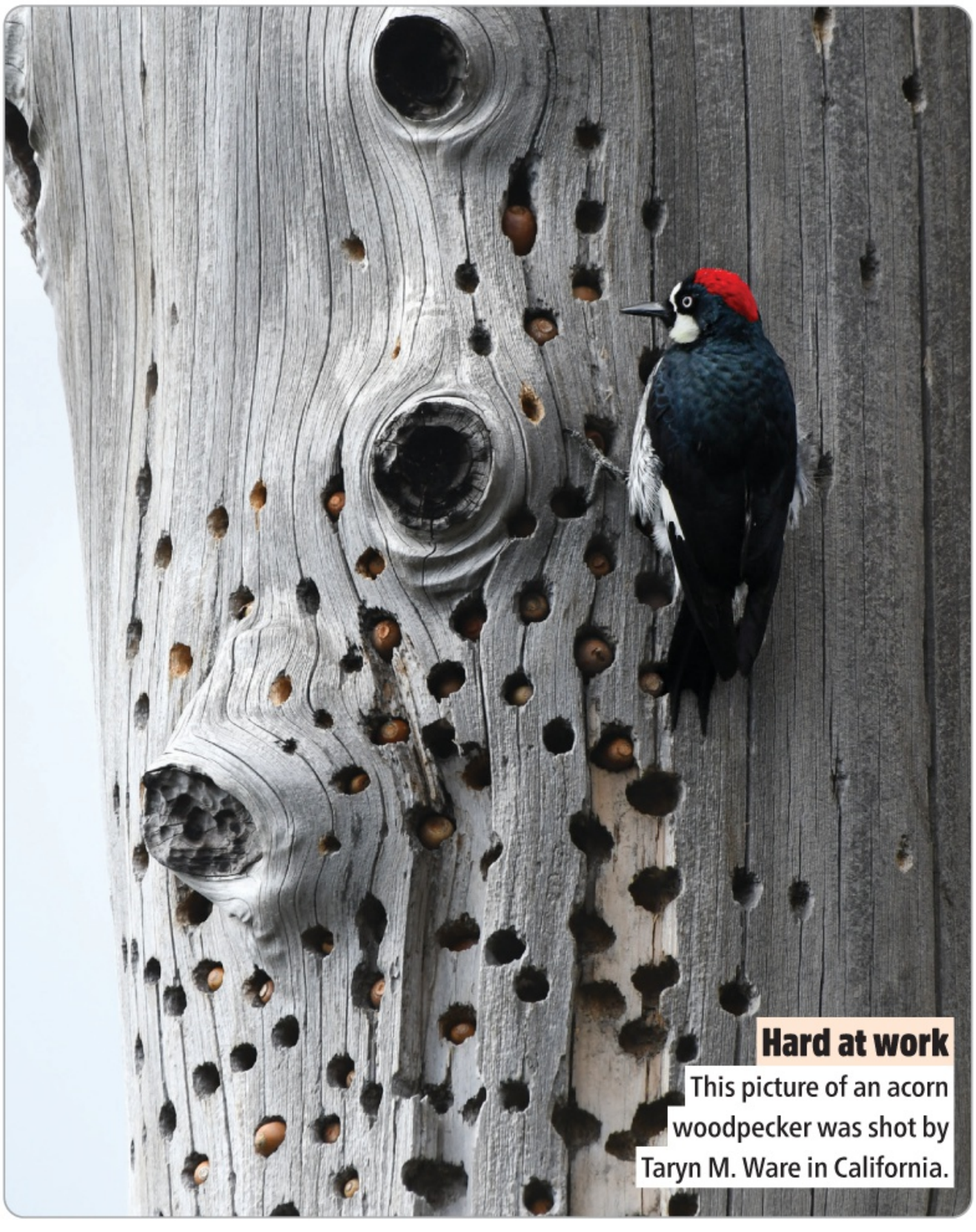
An AI-powered device uses edible ink to print designs directly onto drinks, pastries, cakes, and more. Weighing less than a pound, The Edibot is easily transportable and small enough to carry in a pocket. The ink is safe to eat, vegan, and kosher-friendly.

The Edibot pairs with an app that includes customizable design templates and options for uploading or using AI to generate artwork. Each ink cartridge can make up to 30,000 prints. The Edibot uses more than 10,000 colors and can make prints up to 4 feet long.

LIU ET AL MATTERB; MATT DEMPSEY/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS; IKOFFY; ON LEFT PAGE: EKO HEALTH; GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY

Photos of the week

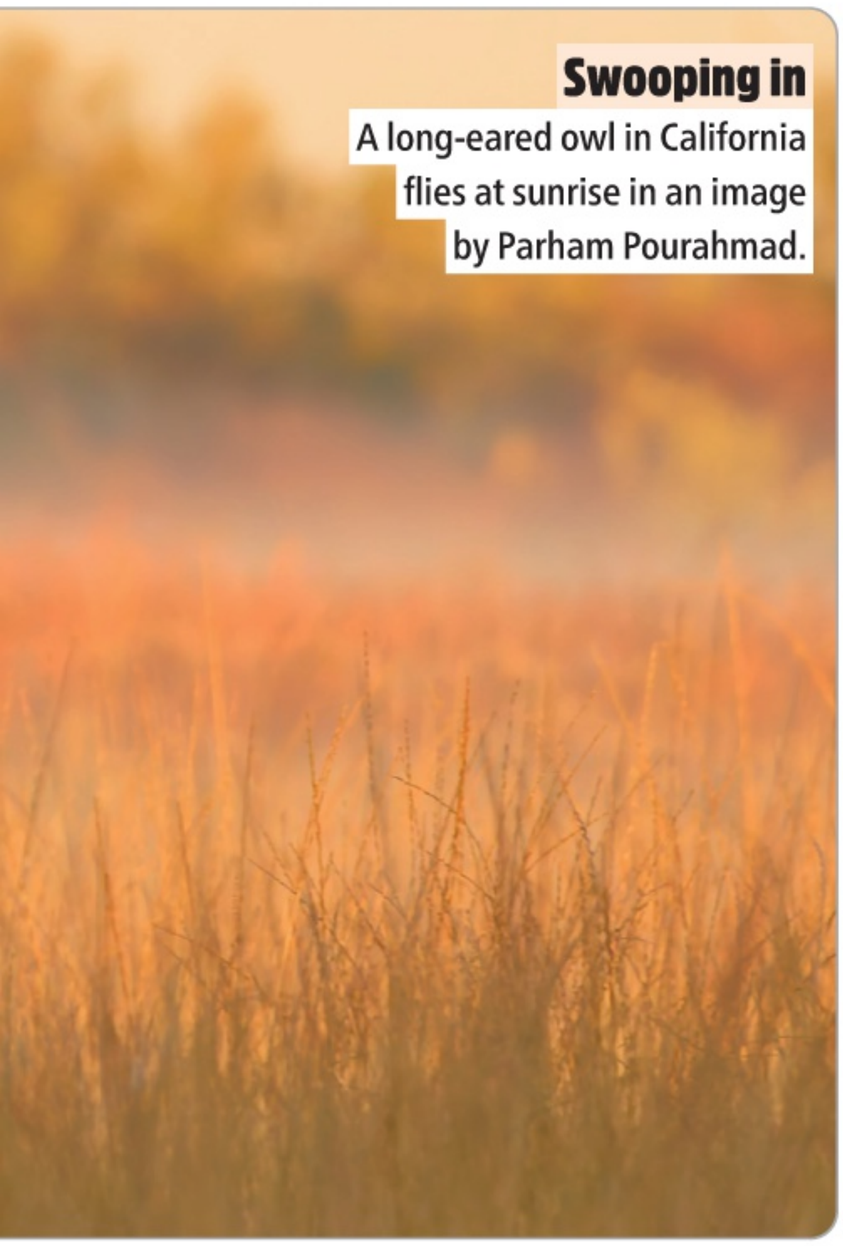
Winging it
Cristian Valencia shot this photo of a purple-backed thornbill in Colombia.



Hard at work
This picture of an acorn woodpecker was shot by Taryn M. Ware in California.

FELIPE ESTEBAN; FRANCISCO VERA-NÚÑEZ; CRISTIAN CAMILO VALENCIA; TARYN WARE; BARBARA SWANSON; PARHAM POURAHMAD

Photos of the week



Swooping in
A long-eared owl in California flies at sunrise in an image by Parham Pourahmad.

Making a splash
A ringed kingfisher rises out of a lagoon in Chile in this photo by Felipe Esteban.

Carrying on
Barbara Swanson captured this image of a Brandt's cormorant in California.

Branching out
Francisco Vera Núñez took this portrait of an Austral pygmy-owl in Chile.

WOW!
A'ja Wilson scored 322 points in this year's WNBA postseason, the most of any player in the league's history.

The Las Vegas Aces

3x3 league grows

In the last WNBA offseason, many players compete in the new 3x3 league, Unrivaled. The league launched with six teams, and it became very popular among players and fans. As a result, Unrivaled is adding two more teams—Breeze BC and Hive BC—for its second season, which begins in January.

Aces win third WNBA title

On October 10, the Las Vegas Aces won the WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association) championship. In Game 4 of the best-of-seven WNBA Finals, they defeated the Phoenix Mercury, 97–86, at the Mortgage Matchup Center in Phoenix, Arizona. It is the Aces' third WNBA title in four years.

The Aces entered the postseason with a regular-season record of 30–14, the second best in the league. They were 14–14 on August 2, but they went on to win 16 consecutive games to end the regular season. During the playoffs, they defeated the Seattle Storm and Indiana Fever on their way to the Finals.

A'ja Wilson

The Mercury finished the regular season in fourth, with a record of 27–17. They eliminated the New York Liberty, last year's champions, in the opening round of the playoffs, then knocked out the top-seeded (ranked) Minnesota Lynx in the semifinals.

The Finals began on October 3 in Las Vegas, Nevada, and the Aces won Game 1, 89–86. The teams were tied with less than five minutes to go, but guard Dana Evans and center A'ja Wilson helped push the Aces ahead. Two days later, the Aces won Game 2, 91–78, behind a combined 60 points from Wilson and guard Jackie Young.

Game 3 in Phoenix was another thriller. The Aces led by 17 points entering the fourth quarter, but the Mercury stormed back and tied things up with about one minute left. With less than a second remaining, Wilson nailed a jump shot over two defenders to secure a 90–88 win. In Game 4, the Aces took control early and had a 54–38 lead at the half. The Mercury got within six points of them in the fourth quarter but could not get closer.

Wilson scored 31 points in Game 4 and was named the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the Finals afterward. During the four games, she averaged 28.5 points, 11.8 rebounds, four assists, and two blocks per game. Last month, she was named MVP of the regular season for a record fourth time, as well as the WNBA's Co-Defensive Player of the Year. She is the first person in WNBA history to win MVP, Finals MVP, and Defensive Player of the Year in the same season.

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

BASEBALL

On October 10, the Seattle Mariners beat the Detroit Tigers, 3–2, in 15 innings to win the American League (AL) Division Series and advance to the AL Championship Series (ALCS) for the first time since 2001. The Toronto Blue Jays also made the ALCS. Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Dodgers and Milwaukee Brewers made it to the National League Championship Series.

The Seattle Mariners

TENNIS

On October 12, Monaco's Valentin Vacherot beat his cousin, Arthur Rinderknech of France, to win the Shanghai Masters and his first title. Vacherot, who was ranked 204th in the world, was the lowest-ranked player to ever win a top-level tournament.

SOCCER

With a win on October 11, the Kansas City Current became the first NWSL team to rack up 20 wins and 62 points (earned from wins and ties) in a season.

ACTION ABROAD

In November, two games between the Nashville Predators and Pittsburgh Penguins will be played in Stockholm, Sweden.

The Panthers vs. the Blackhawks on October 7

NHL regular season begins

The 2025–26 NHL (National Hockey League) season is underway. The Florida Panthers are seeking their third consecutive Stanley Cup, and if they succeed, they will become the first team to win three straight NHL titles since the New York Islanders won four in a row in the 1980s.

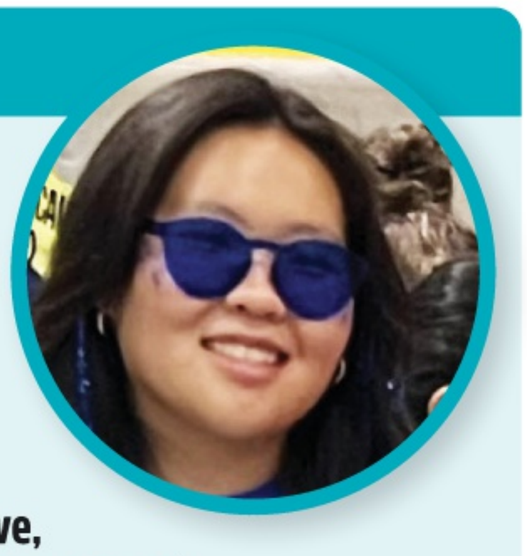
The Panthers are expected to face strong competition from the Vegas Golden Knights and Dallas Stars. Other top teams are expected to include the Edmonton Oilers, Carolina Hurricanes, and Colorado Avalanche. Meanwhile, this will be a special season for the New York Rangers, Detroit Red Wings, and Chicago Blackhawks, who are all celebrating their 100th anniversaries.

The regular season began on October 7. One game that night was between the Panthers and the Blackhawks. The Panthers won, 3–2, with Jesper Boqvist scoring the game-winning goal. Florida won their next two games before losing to the Philadelphia Flyers, 5–2, on October 13.

On October 11, the Stars and Avalanche faced off in a thrilling matchup. Both teams entered the contest without a loss, and they could not be separated after three periods. Neither team scored in overtime, setting up a penalty shootout, which Dallas won to secure a 5–4 victory. The same day, a game between the Anaheim Ducks and San Jose Sharks also went to overtime, with the Ducks winning, 7–6, thanks to a goal by Leo Carlsson.

After nearly a week of games, the teams with the most points (earned through wins and overtime or shootout losses) were the Avalanche, Panthers, Boston Bruins, and Nashville Predators.

COACH OF THE WEEK



Coach's Name: **Hanna Paik**

Team: **Stillwater Starz (swimming)**

"This year was my first year on the swim team, and I was a little nervous! Coach Hannah made everything feel welcoming and helped me a lot. After every swim meet, she would give me tips that would help me improve, and she was always encouraging the whole team during meets and practices. She believed in everyone's ability and pushed us all to be the best version of ourselves in the pool." Noah, 12, Illinois

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Audrey Crowley

AGE: 18 SPORT: PARA SKIING
TEAM: TEAM USA

Early start My sister started racing first, and I got into it right after her. I really liked how freeing skiing was and how every time you ski it's a new adventure. That keeps it exciting. Since second or third grade, all I've wanted is to be a professional skier. I started going to a school that was a ski academy in fifth grade.

Role models I've always looked up to skiers Mikaela Shiffrin and Lindsey Vonn. I've been lucky to have such powerful female Team USA ski racers to watch.

Tough time When I was younger, I broke my arm and then immediately after that I broke my leg. I was out for almost the whole season. When I skied again, I felt like I'd never done it before. I was scared and nervous, but learning how to mentally come back from that was a really important step in my ski career.

Training plan All summer, we lift weights in the gym and do cardio. As we get into ski season, we try to maintain the muscle mass we built up. In the winter, we ski about six days a week, and those sessions are about three hours long.

Top moment My biggest accomplishment in skiing is winning a world championship medal last season. I took third in the giant slalom. It was my first world championships, and we'd had a couple of events canceled because of lack of snow, so emotions were high wondering what was going to happen. I was able to separate all that and bring my best skiing to the table.

Coming up My next goal is to qualify for the US Paralympic team and medal at the 2026 games.

GETTY IMAGES; USSKIANDSNOWBOARD.ORG; FIS PARS SNOW SPORTS; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); UNRIVALED

ANCIENT HISTORY

Aboriginal Australians were among the world's earliest known ocean explorers, traveling from Asia to Australia at least 50,000 years ago.

Gäna (Self) by Nyapanyapa Yunupiŋu

Indigenous Australian art exhibit

The National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, is hosting a groundbreaking show that will eventually travel across the US.

The largest international display of art made by Australia's First Peoples has come to the US. The National Gallery of Art (NGA) in Washington, DC, is hosting *The Stars We Do Not See: Australian Indigenous Art*. There are nearly 200 pieces on display, including paintings, weavings, and sculptures, all created between the 1800s and today.

The exhibition was created with the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) in Australia. Many of the pieces in the show have never before been displayed outside of Australia. *The Stars We Do Not See* was set to open on October 18, but when *The Week Junior* went to press, the NGA was closed due to the government shutdown.

The National Gallery of Art

The artists whose work is featured are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Their cultures are more than 65,000 years old and have deep connections to the land, sea, and sky. The show's title honors artist Gulumbu Yunupiŋu, who depicted the night sky with visible stars plus tiny dots that represent memories and the unseen parts of the universe.

In 1941, the NGA had an exhibition of art from Australia that included a few pieces by Indigenous artists, and their works were presented as primitive and inferior compared to European art. The current show, however, honors the Indigenous peoples and the diversity of their art. NGV Curator Myles Russell-Cook called it "a once-in-a-lifetime chance to discover and fall in love with Indigenous art from Australia."

The Stars We Do Not See will be in North America through January 2028. It will remain at the NGA until March 1, 2026, then travel to Denver, Colorado; Portland, Oregon; Salem, Massachusetts; and Toronto, Canada.

3 works in the exhibition

Mapili Rina (Lots of Shells)

Lola Greeno, who is from lutruwita (Tasmania), creates traditional necklaces like the one at right. It is made with tiny shells on cotton thread. One of her necklaces can take months to create.

Pukumani Tutini

This piece is an example of a type of carved wooden pole that the Tiwi people use in ceremonies to say goodbye to loved ones who have died. The art on the pole tells stories about important Tiwi characters and families.

Wititji (Hair String)

Maggie Napangardi Watson, a member of the Warlpiri people, was known for her brightly colored paintings, like this one from 1997. The lines are made up of tiny dots, and the art tells a story about ancestral women.

MUSICAL MOMENT
Bad Bunny performed a song with Latin pop star Shakira at the 2020 Super Bowl Halftime Show.

Bad Bunny to perform at Super Bowl

The NFL (National Football League), Apple Music, and Roc Nation have announced that award-winning Latin music star Bad Bunny will headline the 2026 Apple Music Super Bowl LX Halftime Show. It is set to take place at Levi's Stadium on February 8 in Santa Clara, California, and will air live on NBC.

Bad Bunny was born in Puerto Rico, and his real name is Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio. He joined his church choir at age 5 and was discovered by a music producer in 2016 after posting songs on Soundcloud. His music style includes Latin pop and reggaeton (a genre that features rhythmic beats and Spanish lyrics). In 2020, his album *El Último Tour del Mundo* became the first all-Spanish-language album to reach number one on the Billboard 200, a list of the most popular albums. He also had the top Billboard 200 album of 2022 with *Un Verano Sin Ti*, which was the first Spanish-language album ever nominated for the Album of the Year Grammy.

This year, Bad Bunny performed 31 sold-out concerts in Puerto Rico, which helped bring an estimated $733 million to the island's economy.

Last month, he was nominated for 12 Latin Grammy Awards, the most of any artist this year. The nominations include Record of the Year, Album of the Year, and Song of the Year.

Getting the opportunity to headline a Super Bowl Halftime Show is a major accomplishment for any performer. In the announcement about the 2026 show, Bad Bunny said, "What I'm feeling goes beyond myself. It's for those who came before me and ran countless yards so I could come in and score a touchdown...this is for my people, my culture, and our history."

READER RECOMMENDS

The Croods *PG (Available to stream or rent on major platforms)*
"This movie is about a curious teen named Eep and her family, the Croods, who live in a cave during prehistoric times. When they lose their home to a rockslide, they are forced to leave their area for the first time. They set out to find a place called Tomorrow. Along the way, they join up with a young man named Guy, who is also looking for Tomorrow. He believes it will provide a better and safer future. This movie is suspenseful and keeps you on the edge of your seat! It also has funny and heartfelt moments, too." Adam, 11, and Dylan, 14, Pennsylvania

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

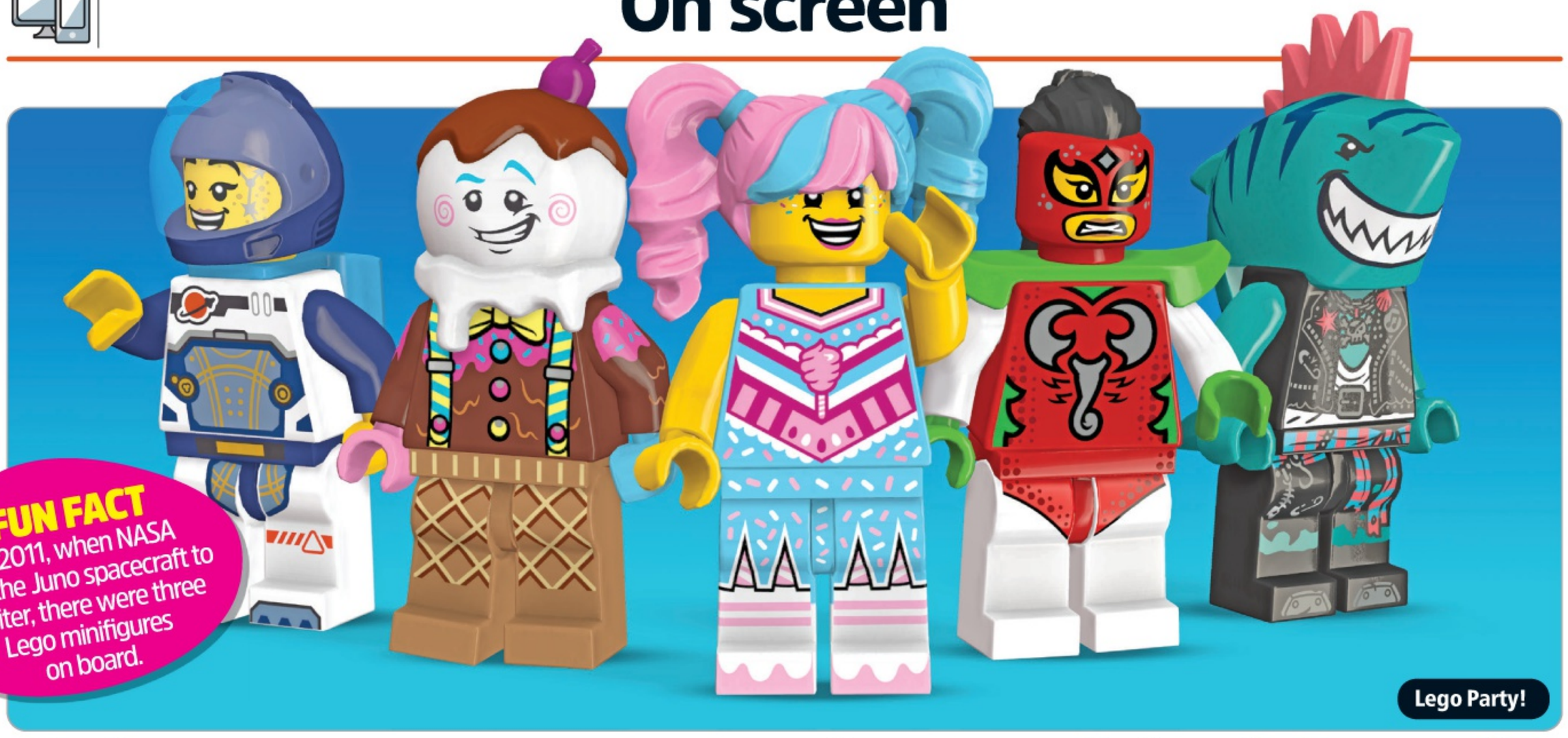
THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST

Teen Titans GO!
(HBO Max)
Young versions of superhero sidekicks Robin, Cyborg, Raven, Starfire, and Beast Boy are the stars of this funny, long-running series. Season nine, now streaming, includes episodes about a team swap with the Joker and Robin's search to catch the thief of his overnight oats.

Nightmares of Nature
(Netflix)
This new documentary series uses suspenseful storytelling to show how an opossum, iguana, and jumping spider fight to survive in nature. It is narrated by Maya Hawke, a star of *Stranger Things* and the voice of Anxiety in *Inside Out 2*. The show is rated TV-PG, but it has a scary tone.

America's Funniest Home Videos
(ABC) (Hulu)
The series' Halloween episode, which airs on ABC on October 26 at 7 p.m. ET, will include clips of kids wrestling with spooky decorations while trick-or-treating and adults getting surprised by creepy-crawlies. As always, the person who submits the funniest video will win a cash prize.

GETTY IMAGES; NFL; DREAMWORKS; DC ENTERTAINMENT; COURTESY OF NETFLIX; DISNEY/JOHN FLEENOR; ON
LEFT PAGE: TOM ROSS; GETTY IMAGES; HEATH WARWICK/NGV (2); NARELLE WILSON/NGV



FUN FACT
In 2011, when NASA sent the Juno spacecraft to Jupiter, there were three Lego minifigures on board.

Lego Party!

A Lego game to play with friends

Lego Party! is a new multiplayer minigame adventure. It is out now for the Nintendo Switch, PlayStation platforms, Xbox systems, and PC.

The game is similar to Nintendo's Mario Party series and allows up to four players to compete on a living board game stocked with minigames, collectibles, and surprises—plus a lot of jokes and chaos.

Lego Party! is set within a TV game show hosted by brickheads Paige Turner and Ted Talker. Their comedic commentary helps you learn the rules, and they also narrate the action. You get to customize your own minifigure to use while you play. There are four board game worlds called Challenge Zones, and each one is modeled after one of four classic Lego playsets: Ninjago, Pirate, Space, and Theme Park.

Players roll the dice to move around each zone, and a round begins with one of 60 minigames. These games include Lego-inspired building activities, dirt-bike races, and musical challenges. As you play you earn golden studs, the in-game currency used to buy power-ups and Golden Bricks. You can carry up to three power-ups on the board. They provide special skills and chances to swipe rivals' Golden Bricks and studs.

Every Challenge Zone has unique tasks and battles. The boards have construction zones, too, where you can change the map and the gameplay. To make a location more exciting, you can build an Extreme Zone, where you'll have stunts to perform and Golden Bricks to steal. It comes in handy because the player with the most Golden Bricks wins the game.

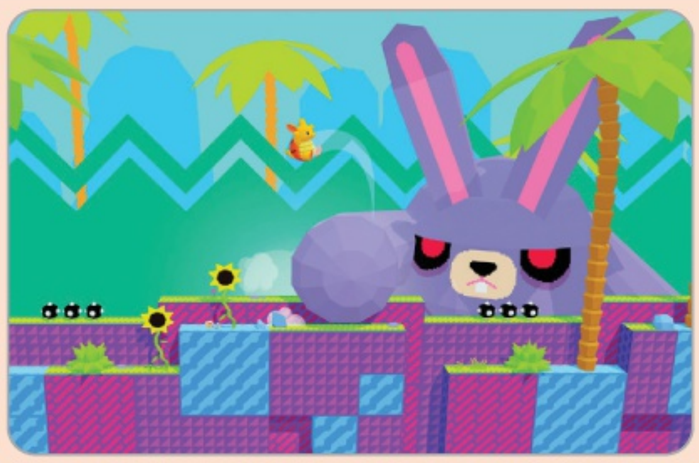
PODCAST OF THE WEEK

BUST OR TRUST

Major podcast platforms

Alien abductions, ancient astronauts, and psychic detectives are among the topics discussed in the newest episodes of this long-running series. The hosts share information that supports or debunks every topic, then listeners can decide what they think is true.

GAME OF THE WEEK



DUNKADILLO

Google Play

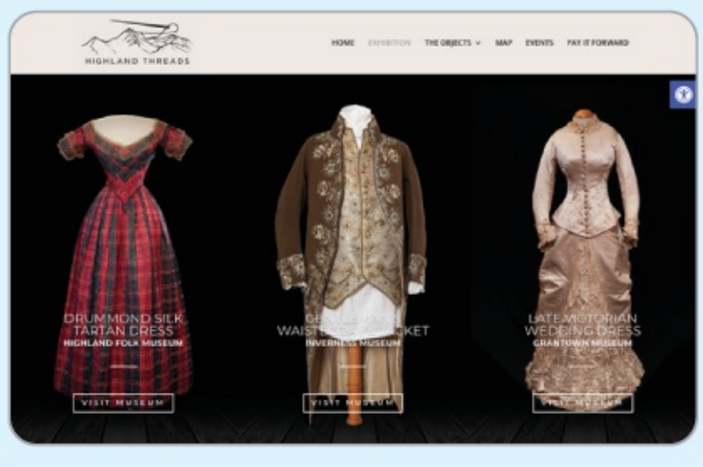
In this mobile game, you play as Dill, an armadillo that can become a basketball. Dill has to rescue his best friend Pickle while bouncing through the game's 50 levels, which are filled with obstacles such as porcupines and exploding bees. Collecting cards in the game unlocks new characters.

WEBSITE OF THE WEEK

HIGHLAND THREADS

highlandthreads.co.uk/exhibition

Fourteen museums from the Highlands of Scotland teamed up to create this online exhibition about clothes from Scotland's history. Items to see include a tartan dress and a knitted swimsuit. The site also has photos, videos, and stories that explain the connection of the different pieces to Highland life.



LEGO/SMG STUDIO (2); SMALL WARDOUR; THOMAS K. YOUNG; JIM DUNN/MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE HIGHLAND

BOO! 2025

BOOK OF THE WEEK

The House Next Door

By Ellen Oh

(HarperCollins)

Rory lives next door to a house that's haunted. Ever since he can remember, the house has scared people away with its sinister noises and creepy spirits. Once when Rory was outside near the house, something mysterious attacked him, leaving him with bloody scratches on his arms. Rory's grandfather has a fence installed to better separate the homes from each other. When a new family with a son about Rory's age, named Jack, moves into the house, Rory wants to protect them. He and Jack quickly become good friends, bonding over video games and Asian food. Rory can't stand the thought of anything bad happening to Jack, so he summons his courage to go to a sleepover at Jack's house and confront whatever evil may reside within the walls. Will the spirit turn out to be the ghost of an elderly woman who disliked children or a group of fantastical monsters? Jack and Rory both become determined to find out. This spooky story also includes whimsical humor. For example, when Rory turns to the internet for help on how to fight mysterious ghosts, he visits BooTube.

ASK THE AUTHOR

Ellen Oh

We spoke to the author of the Book of the Week.

What inspired this book?
I wanted to write a scary story where the characters conquer their fears.

Have you always liked scary stories?
My father's favorite thing in the world was to tell a scary story, so I heard a lot growing up.

What inspired Rory?
Rory represents the part of me who is worried and scared and wants to do something about it.

How would you describe Rory and Jack's friendship?
The boys are complete opposites who also complement each other.

Favorite Halloween memory?
When my kids were young, I took them to a Halloween party, and they burst out crying when they saw a clown. The clown kept saying, "I'm a happy clown," but they kept crying and we had to leave. Now we all laugh about that.

READER RECOMMENDS

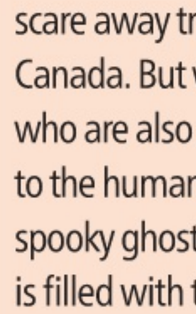
One Crazy Summer: The Graphic Novel *By Rita Williams-Garcia*

"Delphine and her sisters live in Brooklyn, New York, with their dad and grandma. One summer, they are sent to visit their mom, who left to start a new life in Oakland, California. When they arrive, they realize their mom is not what they expected. She doesn't cook for them, and she's mean. She sends them to day camp so she can focus on her activism, and they begin to have a crazy summer." Maati, 10, Ohio

Do you have a book to recommend? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

4 spooky books to enjoy for Halloween

These chilling tales by popular authors are full of adventure and fun.



The Black Market

By Jed Alexander

(Union Square Kids)

Martin is excited that the Black Market, an exhibition of strange goods for sale, is coming to town. After he goes and gets a half bag of tricks, he causes all sorts of mayhem, like turning his dad bright red. This fast-paced adventure story is more creepy than scary. *Ages 8–12*

The Ghosts of Bitterfly Bay

By Mary Averling

(Putnam)

Maudie is a ghost who tries to scare away travelers from a lakeside cottage in Canada. But when her friend and little brother, who are also ghosts, go missing, Maudie turns to the human she's been haunting for help. A spooky ghost story with a lot of heart, this novel is filled with twists and turns. *Ages 8–12*

The Last Resort

By Erin Entrada Kelly

(Scholastic)

After her grandfather dies, Lila discovers she can communicate with ghosts. The ghost of her grandfather tells her that he was murdered and needs help. Lila, her brother, and a friend must solve the crime and stop the evil spirits from entering the human world. This book is the first in a clever new series. *Ages 8–12*

Stinetinglers 1

By R.L. Stine

(Feiwel & Friends)

This book of short stories is by the author of the famous *Goosebumps* series. The eerie tales include a story about a boy who sees bugs everywhere, one about an athlete whose skin begins to drip off his hand, and another about a hole in the ground that keeps getting bigger and bigger. Each tale is introduced by Stine. *Ages 8–12*

BOOKS: COURTESY OF PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: SUSIE JAMES; GETTY IMAGES

Have the best Halloween ever

Try these ideas, recipes, and a fun craft to celebrate the holiday in a big way!

From choosing your costume to planning your trick-or-treat route, there are so many ways to make the Halloween holiday memorable. Here are a few tips for having a safe and fun celebration.

Get into the spirit

Leading up to the big day, you can set the mood by watching Halloween movies like *Hocus Pocus*, *Hotel Transylvania*, or *Frankenweenie*. Add a few decorations to your room, like mini pumpkins or glow-in-the dark bats. You can also make your own decorations. See the craft instructions for paper tube ghosts on the opposite page.

Double-check your costume

Try on your costume ahead of time to make sure you have all the items you need, including accessories and makeup. Make or select a Halloween playlist to listen to when you're getting into costume. You can cue up classic songs like "Monster Mash," "The Purple People Eater," "Ghostbusters," and "The Addams Family Theme."

Make the day feel special

You can start Halloween morning with a festive breakfast, like the monster mash toast on the opposite page. If you're not wearing your costume to school, you can dress in orange and black or put on a fun Halloween shirt, a plastic spider ring, or spooky skeleton socks. If you'd like to pack a Halloween-themed lunch, try using a bat or ghost cookie cutter to make your sandwich a spooky shape. Draw a jack-o'-lantern face on a clementine for a sweet and fun addition.

Plan your trick-or-treat strategy

Pick a familiar neighborhood with lots of Halloween decorations—people who are in the Halloween spirit are more likely to give out candy. Wear comfortable shoes and stay with your group. You and your family and friends can bring flashlights and wear glowsticks so it's easier for you to see one another and for others to see you. End the day by sorting candy and making trades. You can use any leftover candy to make the candy bark below!

Halloween candy bark

What you need

- Baking sheet or tray
- Parchment paper
- Leftover candy (like mini chocolate bars, peanut butter cups, candy-coated chocolates, and candy corn)
- Knife and cutting board
- Heatproof glass or metal bowl
- 12 ounces of dark, milk, or white chocolate or chocolate chips
- Rubber spatula
- Optional: other toppings like pretzels, cookies, or sprinkles

Instructions

WARNING! Ask an adult's permission before using the stove.

1. Line a baking sheet or tray with parchment paper.
2. Cut up your choice of leftover candy into smaller pieces for the bark.
3. Put 1–2 inches of water into a small saucepan and place a heatproof glass or metal bowl on top. The bowl should be large enough to sit above the water, not in it.
4. Heat the water gently (but don't boil it). Stir the chocolate until just melted. Keep the flame low so steam doesn't splash into the chocolate. Once melted, use an oven mitt to take the bowl off the heat and stir chocolate with the spatula.
5. Pour the chocolate onto the parchment-lined sheet. Spread it about ¼ inch thick (or whatever thickness you like). To smooth it, lift the pan and gently tap it on the table.
6. Sprinkle the chopped candy toppings evenly over the chocolate.
7. Let it cool and harden for at least 2 hours at room temperature (or about 30 minutes in the refrigerator).
8. Break the bark into pieces by hand or with a knife. Store in an airtight container in a cool place or in the fridge.

SWEET STAT
In 2024, M&M's were the most popular Halloween candy in the US, followed by Reese's Cups and Sour Patch Kids.

Recycled cardboard tube ghosts

What you need

- Scrap paper to protect your work surface
- Recycled cardboard toilet or paper towel tubes
- White acrylic craft paint, tempera paint, or acrylic primer
- Paintbrush
- Scissors (small detail series work best)
- Black paint pen or marker
- Optional, to make a garland: string and large sewing needle or pushpin

Instructions

1. Keep your work surface protected by covering it with scrap paper.
2. Paint the tubes white and let them dry.
3. Make a head: Use scissors to cut one end of the tube, so it slopes from a tall point in the front to a lower curve in the back.
4. Cut curvy or pointy "tails" at the bottom.
5. Draw on eyes and a mouth with a paint pen or a marker.
6. To make a garland (optional): Use a pushpin to poke a hole on each side of the ghost, near its eyes, as shown in the photo. Cut a piece of string as long as you'd like for your garland, plus a few extra inches for hanging. Thread the string through the holes using a needle or pushpin. Repeat with additional ghosts until the garland is as long as you would like.

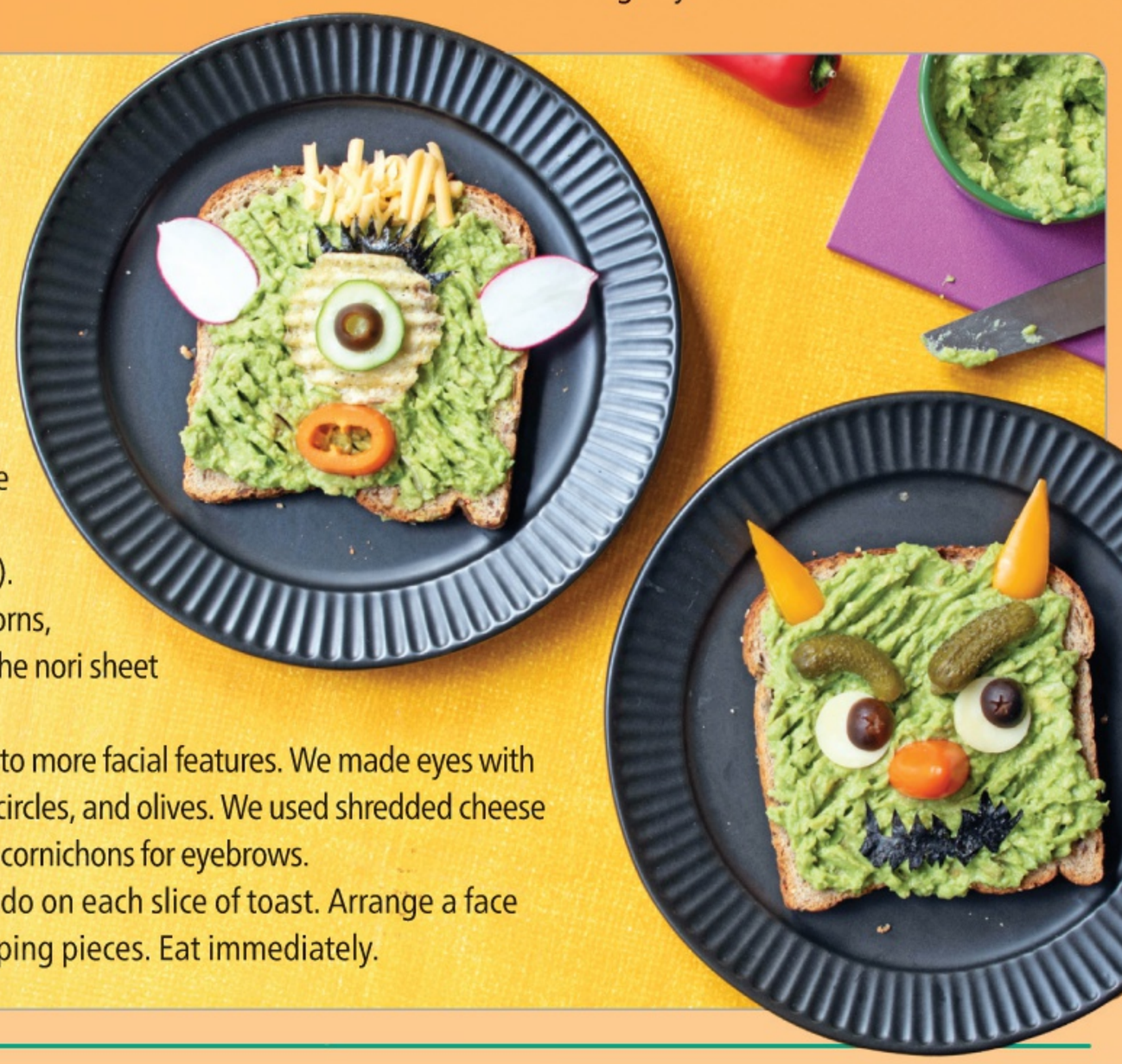
Monster mash toast

Ingredients

- 2 slices of your favorite bread
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper
- 1 avocado, peeled and pitted
- Half a lemon
- 2 or 3 mini bell peppers
- 1 small sheet of nori seaweed snack
- Various toppings, such as shredded or sliced cheese, olives, cornichons, potato chips, cucumbers, and radishes

Instructions

1. Toast each slice of bread and set aside. Place the avocado in a small bowl and use a fork to mash it until mostly smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add a small squeeze of lemon (this will prevent the avocado from browning quickly).
2. Trim the bell peppers into ears, horns, noses, or mouths as shown. Use the nori sheet to make eyelashes or a mouth.
3. Cut your other chosen toppings into more facial features. We made eyes with potato chips, cucumbers, cheese circles, and olives. We used shredded cheese for hair, radish slices for ears, and cornichons for eyebrows.
4. Spread a layer of mashed avocado on each slice of toast. Arrange a face on each with your prepared topping pieces. Eat immediately.



BANNER AND BARK: JODI LEVINE FOR SUPERMAKEIT; TOAST: JOY HOWARD; GETTY IMAGES

Word ladder

To change the word FULL into the word MOON, use each clue to fill in a word that is only one letter different from the word before it. If you get stuck, try solving from the bottom up.

F U L L

Gasoline or oil used for heat ▶

Use your sense of touch ▶

Eight ___ (height of Frankenstein's monster, in the novel) ▶

Gather to go trick-or-treating ▶

What a carnivorous creature eats ▶

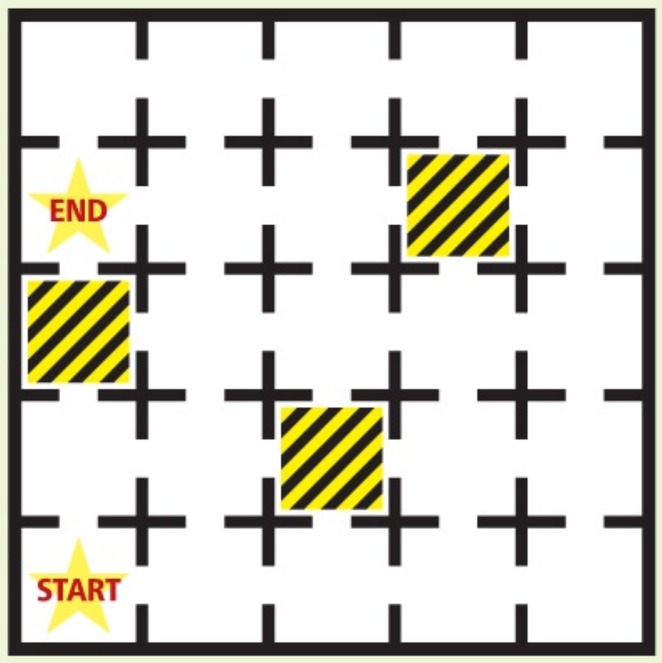
Water that might be crossed with a drawbridge ▶

Sound from an unhappy ghost ▶

M O O N

DO NOT ENTER

Draw one continuous path from START to END that goes through every box except the ones containing obstacles. Your path may not cross itself, and there is only one solution.



STEPPING STONES

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Each figure hides the seven-letter name of a classic monster character. To find each one, start anywhere and move in an unbroken path through letters that share a border (no jumping!), using each letter once.

Crossmath

Fill each empty box with a number or a mathematical symbol (+, −, ×, or ÷) to complete the equations across and down. A symbol can be used more than once. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

	38			
11		8	=	
	1			
	=			4
		+		= 44
				22

Spot the difference

These two pictures of a pair of French bulldog trick-or-treaters appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Crossmath hint: The box above the 4 gets a division sign.

That's unbelievable!

Keyboard with a cheesy theme

Dirk Hooley has created a delectable computer accessory: a keyboard made of many tiny pieces of "cheese." Although it may look edible, it's actually a mechanical keyboard that can be used to type. Hooley used a 3D printer to build the custom key pieces. Most of the keys are designed to look like cubes of Swiss cheese with holes in them. If you look closely, their shapes resemble the letters they represent. Other keys include tiny models of a mouse, cheese grater, and jar of jam.

A brave skydiving adventure

A pair of daring grandmas raised money for their senior care home by going skydiving. Joan Small, 85, and Liz Lord, 75, wanted to show appreciation to the Belvedere House in Surrey, England, for taking care of them. Wearing parachutes, the duo dived more than 14,000 feet from a plane. "It was absolutely wonderful," Lord said. "It was very adventurous for us both." They raised more than $8,000 for the home, which plans to use the money for well-being programs and live performances to bring more joy to residents.

Mario fan's super collection

Since he was 5 years old, Steve Bagley has been a big fan of Mario, the famous Nintendo character. For the past 40 years, the UK man has collected more than 2,000 Mario-related items. His collection includes 50 Nintendo consoles, nearly 500 games, figures, posters, autographs, and antique playing cards. Bagley keeps everything in a bedroom in his house and said he is now playing Mario Kart with his son. "Mario has definitely stood the test of time," he said. "It takes something really special to last that long."

Real or fake?

Ducks move into mansion

On a lake in northern Taiwan, ducks have been invited to stay in a new luxury mansion. A local artist was asked to design a stately home to make the cold winters, hot summers, and harsh tropical storm seasons more comfortable for the aquatic birds. After several years of careful planning, a mansion with several bedrooms, dining rooms, and specially designed duck toilets was built. Human staff members bring the ducks a range of tasty treats and drinks. Is this story true, or is it just quackery?*

*Fake! There is no duck mansion with bedrooms and waiters, but designer Cheng Tsung Feng has created floating homes to protect the birds from the elements. He designed four wooden huts as cozy shelters for the ducks.

COVER IMAGES; SWNS (3); SHUTTERSTOCK (2); GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

Your turn

Editor's note

The photos being released to the world from the Middle East after an agreement was reached between Israel and Hamas are breathtaking (p2). After two long years of a terrible war, the images of hostages being reunited with their families in Israel and Palestinians walking home after being displaced amid the fighting, among many other striking representations of this historic moment, were a welcome sight. I also appreciated the fact that more than 20 world leaders traveled to Egypt for the signing of the agreement, demonstrating solidarity for this important cause. Experts have pointed out that the agreement is fragile—it is the first phase in a complex process involving intense negotiations over many points of contention. It is my great hope that leaders will find a way to work together and compromise so a lasting peace can be achieved.

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

Kids in Need Foundation

This organization provides classroom supplies to schools in under-resourced communities. Its mission is to empower students to realize their potential and to help them envision a brighter future. The group has supported approximately 200,000 teachers in all 50 states and has distributed more than $143 million in supplies and resources.

Find out more at kinf.org.

KIDS IN NEED FOUNDATION

A rock-solid fundraiser

"This summer, I decided to help a foundation called Abbey's Hope. I painted rocks with colorful, fun designs and thought it would be a cool idea to sell them at my brother's baseball game. I set up a table by the concession stand. Anyone who donated to Abbey's Hope got one of my painted rocks in exchange! My friend helped me, and we were able to raise more than $300 for Abbey's Hope. It was so much fun to see the joy the rocks brought to everybody while also helping a good cause!"

Zoe, 13, and Carlee, 13, Minnesota

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

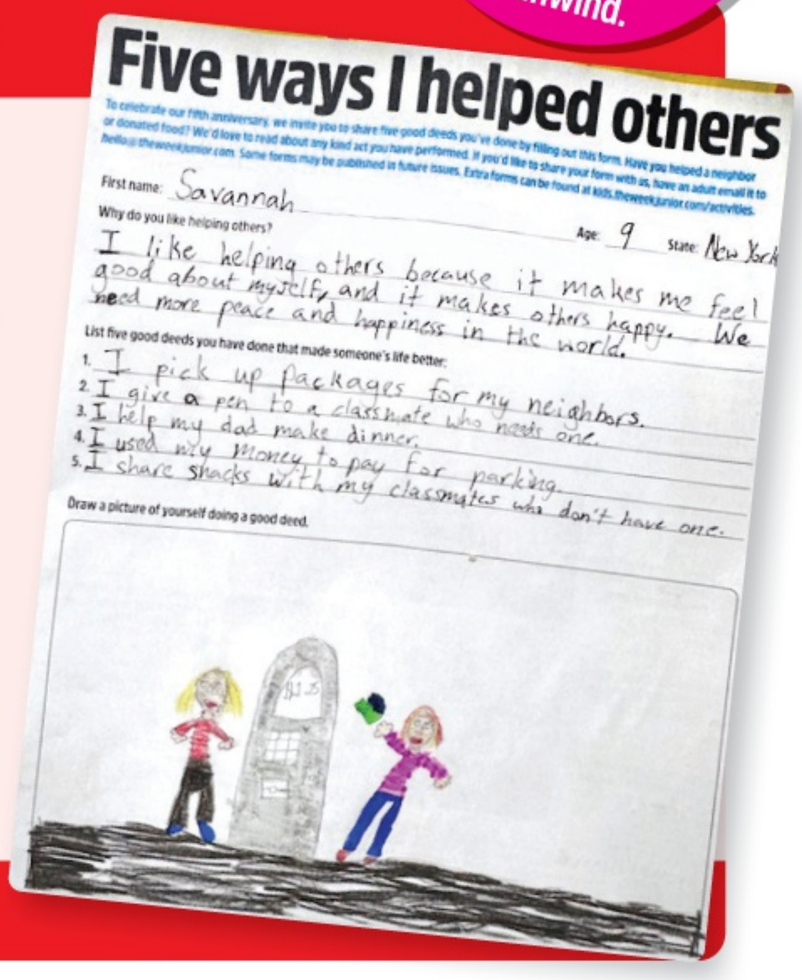
JOKE OF THE WEEK

Why don't mummies take vacations?

They don't like to unwind.

Your five good deeds

Savannah, a 9-year-old from New York, enjoys helping others. Savannah's good deeds include helping her dad make dinner, sharing snacks with her classmates, and picking up her neighbors' packages. To celebrate *The Week Junior*'s fifth anniversary in 2025, we're asking readers to share five good deeds they've done. Have you helped a neighbor or a friend or performed a kind act? Go to kids.theweekjunior.com/activities to download a form like the one shown at right. Fill it out, then have an adult email it to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*. We'll feature some of the submissions on this page in future issues.



Five ways I helped others

To celebrate our fifth anniversary, we invite you to share five good deeds you've done by filling out this form. Have you helped a neighbor or donated food? We'd love to read about any kind act you have performed. If you'd like to share your form with us, have an adult email it to hello@theweekjunior.com. Some forms may be published in future issues. Extra forms can be found at kids.theweekjunior.com/activities.

First name: Savannah Age: 9 State: New York

Why do you like helping others?
I like helping others because it makes me feel good about myself and it makes others happy. We need more peace and happiness in the world.

List five good deeds you have done that made someone's life better:
1. I pick up packages for my neighbors.
2. I give a pen to a classmate who needs one.
3. I help my dad make dinner.
4. I used my money to pay for parking.
5. I share snacks with my classmates who don't have one.

Draw a picture of yourself doing a good deed.

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"Jaguars are my favorite animal, and I was very excited to see them featured in *The Week Junior*." Brendan, 8, Georgia

"The cinnamon apple pie fries were so good! I want to make them over and over again." Tara, 9, New Jersey

"I love reading *The Week Junior* before I go to bed." Charlie, 11, Texas

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Gary Chinn**

School: **Francis Scott Key Elementary**

"Mr. Chinn is an awesome teacher. He is kind, funny, and smart. Mr. Chinn makes school fun by telling us stories from when he was a child. Mr. Chinn also makes school like a video game with HP, XP, avatars, and more. He sometimes hosts a Pokémon club after school! Mr. Chinn is the best teacher ever!"

Leona, 9, California

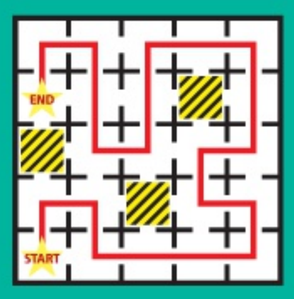
Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Puzzle answers (from page 26)

Word ladder
FULL
FUEL
FEEL
FEET
MEET
MEAT
MOAT
MOAN
MOON

Stepping stones
Wolfman, Dracula



		38		
11	×	8	=	88
1			÷	
=				4
38	+	6	=	44
		22		

Quiz answers (from page 30)

1 c) Stingy Jack **2** True **3** c) Venezuela **4** Golden Bricks **5** False. They use their front arms. **6** b) 1981 **7** A'ja Wilson **8** False. It is the oldest. **9** c) Pennsylvania **10** True **11** "Fire tiger" **12** a) Succulent **13** True **14** BooTube **15** b) Cheese

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

Quiz

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 What was the name of the mythical character who inspired the term jack-o'-lantern?
a) Scary Jack b) Spooky Jack
c) Stingy Jack
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 True or false? Bad Bunny had the first all-Spanish-language album to reach number one on the Billboard 200.
True ☐ False ☐

3 This year's Nobel Peace Prize winner is from what country?
a) Brazil b) Mexico c) Venezuela
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4 In the video game Lego Party!, the player with the most of what item wins the game?

5 True or false? Octopuses mainly use their back arms to explore their environment.
True ☐ False ☐

6 In what year did the MacArthur Foundation begin awarding fellowships, also known as "genius grants"?
a) 1961 b) 1981 c) 2001
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

7 Which Las Vegas Aces star was named the 2025 WNBA Finals MVP?

8 True or false? The newly identified spiky dinosaur called Spicomellus afer is the youngest ankylosaur ever found.
True ☐ False ☐

11

1

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

4

5

9

9 Which state was the first in the US to recognize Diwali as a statewide holiday?
a) California
b) Connecticut
c) Pennsylvania
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

10 True or false? New poet laureate Arthur Sze's most well-known book is *Sight Lines*.
True ☐ False ☐

11 The Asian golden cat is also known as what in Thai folklore?

12 Scientists who created glow-in-the-dark plants said the technique worked best on which type of plant?
a) Succulent
b) Bok choy
c) Pothos
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 True or false? In a new poll, 29% of parents with kids ages 8 to 10 said their child had their own smartphone.
True ☐ False ☐

14 In the book *The House Next Door*, where does Rory go on the internet to learn how to fight ghosts?

15 Dirk Hooley created a computer keyboard that looks like it's made of what food?
a) Butter b) Cheese
c) Chocolate
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

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GETTY IMAGES (3); ALAMY; LEGO

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